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STUDIES IN ECONOMICS

NUMBER 1

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SURVEY OF A  
RURAL TOWNSHIP IN SOUTHERN MINNESOTA

BY

CARL W. THOMPSON

AND

G. P. WARBER



Bureau of Research in Agricultural Economics  
Department of Agriculture

MINNEAPOLIS  
Published by the University of Minnesota  
April 1913

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# The University of Minnesota

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*W.D.*  
*B.F.*

SECRET

## PREFACE

When a merchant reaches the end of his fiscal year and desires to learn the results of his work, he proceeds to take an inventory of the stock on hand. He knows that for any particular part of the business it is impossible to measure income against outlay and thus ascertain its net showing, without first taking into account the inventory feature.

Similarly, as we turn to rural-life problems and consider either the individual business unit on the farm or the community interest as a whole, we are called upon to follow simple business rules in order to be able to interpret the kind of development that takes place. The farmer must keep separate accounts with each source of income or outlay on the farm. He must also take periodic inventories for each of the profit and loss accounts before their significance is made apparent.

In the same way, a knowledge of community development requires the use of accounts and inventories. These may be illustrated in the increasing attention devoted to statistical compilation through various governmental agencies as well as through the efforts of voluntary organizations. Perhaps no better example is afforded of large-scale community inventories than those embodied in the reports of the federal census. Salient features pertaining to population, agriculture, manufacturing, and mining are here enumerated, as disclosed at ten-year intervals, furnishing an essential basis for a general interpretation of the direction of national development.

Where work of such magnitude is attempted, the number of items for which information is secured must necessarily be somewhat limited. Even with the much-enlarged scope of inquiry carried on by the compilers of the latest census report, there still remains a vast amount of material as yet uncovered and regarding which the public must needs remain ignorant.

To supplement the general surveys of state- or nation-wide scope, it is important, therefore, that typical communities be subjected to more intensive study. Only by such a method can the social, economic, political, educational, and religious activities be compared and related to the larger community life of which they are a part.

Information of this kind is not secured with sufficient accuracy by the method of cursory observation. Experience has shown that many of the commonplace generalizations popularly accepted as a matter of course are not at all founded on facts, but are carried over from other times or conditions and retained through the sheer inertia of habitual modes of thinking. With the large amount of attention given to the problem of rural better-



ment in recent years, as evidenced by discussions in magazines and newspapers, further emphasis is given to the need of laying a solid foundation in facts before attempting to effect changes in the superstructure. We may rest assured that the laudable effort of promulgating programs of reform for the betterment of rural life will carry weight only when it reflects a due appreciation of what life now affords to the average individual living in a typical rural community.

These considerations suggest that no apology is necessary for making intensive studies of representative regions provided the work is carried on in the proper spirit and sufficient care is exercised to secure approximate accuracy in the results.

The fact that a given community is selected for the purposes of such a study does not reflect in any way upon the standards of its people. While weaknesses are naturally to be divulged wherever any community is subjected to careful scrutiny, there are merits to be noted as well, a knowledge of which should be available for communities elsewhere. Moreover, it is hoped that the Survey will prove of value, not only to the extent that it reflects the rural-life conditions of a leading township of southern Minnesota, but also in the suggestions it may furnish for undertakings of a similar sort for other regions of the State. To those who feel interested in such work, the coöperation of the Bureau will be freely offered in furnishing suggestive outlines and other information helpful for the purpose.

With due appreciation of the difficulties as well as the importance of studies of this kind, the Bureau of Research in Agricultural Economics has, therefore, undertaken an intensive study of one of the more prosperous rural townships in southern Minnesota. The particular community under review was selected largely because of the information already available from other forms of study made in the same region. During the last ten or twelve years statistics regarding cost of production have been gathered from a number of typical farms in this township. A detailed soil survey of the whole county was made by the Bureau of Soils of the United States Department of Agriculture three years ago. Moreover, a farm-management survey aiming to gather data regarding farm practice and returns on all the farms of the same township was being planned simultaneously by the Division of Farm Management of this institution. With these other lines of information available for the same township it seemed fitting, therefore, to engage in a social and economic survey in order to ascertain the larger relations between the life in the township and the outside world as well as the internal relations between the farm units and local institutions and between the farm units themselves.

In order to secure the necessary information the Bureau proceeded with the consent of the authorities of the University to gather first-hand

## PREFACE

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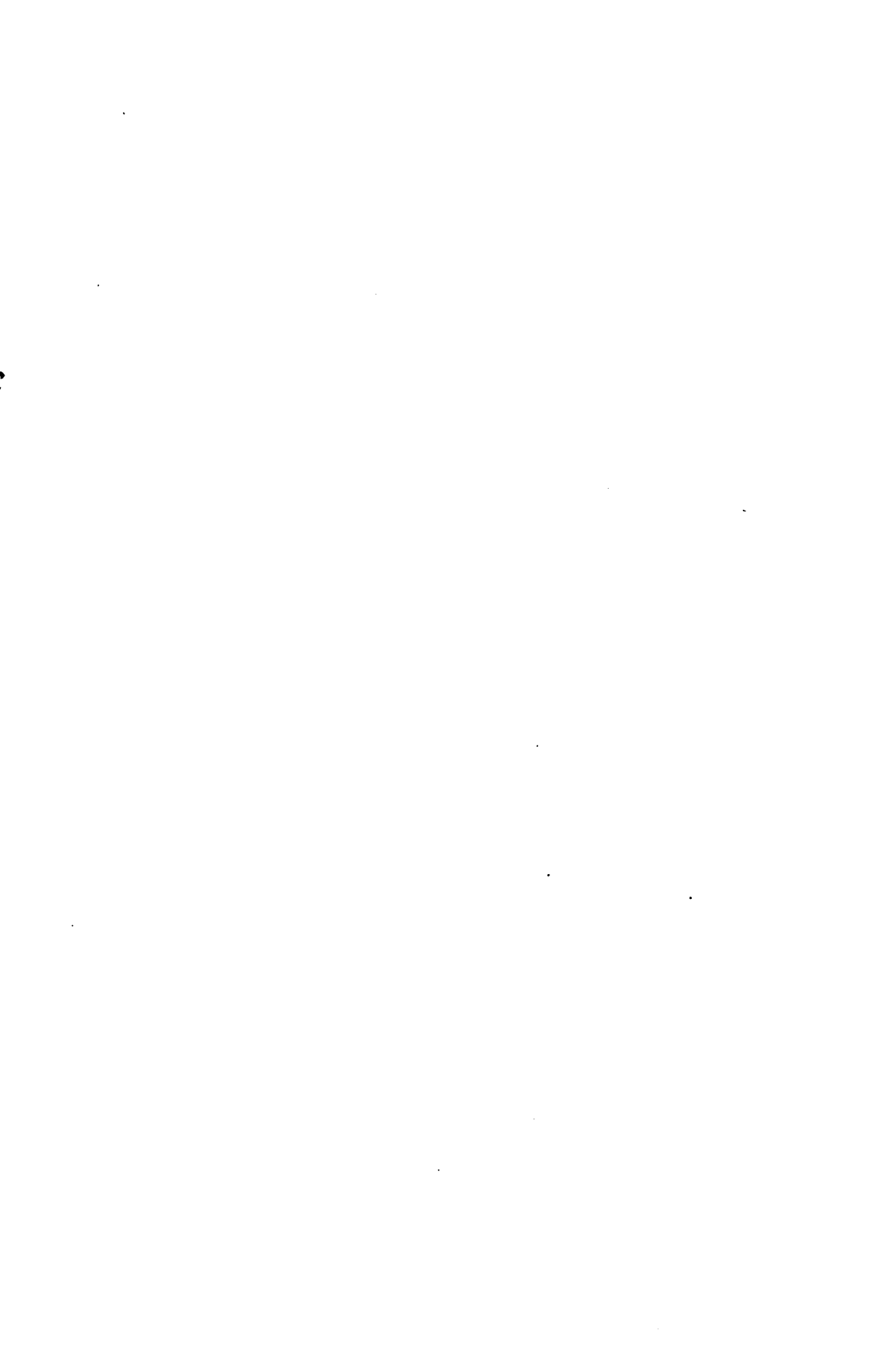
data from one hundred and thirty-six families living within an area of thirty-six square miles of rural territory, as well as from the various markets and other agencies tributary to this region.

This field work required the full time of one man during June, July, and August, 1912. While considerable care had been exercised in the preparation of outlines showing kinds of data desired from each of the homes visited, the amount and value of the information gathered depended, of course, to a great extent upon the resourcefulness and tact of the person making the inventory. Fortunately, the field agent selected for this purpose, Mr. G. P. Warber, is a man singularly equipped to undertake such a task. Endowed with unusual native ability and favored with the experience of the average boy from the farm as well as with agricultural and scientific training at the University of Minnesota, Mr. Warber adapted himself readily to a multitude of situations, winning the good-will and confidence of nearly all the people with whom he came in contact. The importance of this becomes apparent as one examines the contents of the following chapters. No small part of the quest under the different topics treated is that of getting the attitude of the rural folks themselves towards the various agencies and institutions in their midst. Much of the merit of the work lies in the inventory of attitudes thus set forth.

While the heaviest part of the work in preparing this Survey has necessarily devolved upon Mr. Warber, credit is also due the chief clerk of the Bureau, Miss Olga Axness, who has tabulated and summarized the different kinds of data and prepared all the diagrams on the following pages.

C. W. THOMPSON,

*Director*



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# SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SURVEY OF A RURAL TOWNSHIP IN SOUTHERN MINNESOTA

## INTRODUCTION

During the fifties of the last century vast tracts of the prairie region of the Central Northwestern states were taken up by the influx of immigration that followed the surveying and opening-up of those lands. Most of the early settlers of these regions were natives who had come from the "worn-out farm regions" of the East, although there were some northern European immigrants among them. Large groups of these homeseekers left the river ports and western terminals of railways, starting overland across the country and journeying until they reached some place where the choice lands had not yet been "claimed." These claims were all staked under the old Preëmption Law, according to which anybody could file on a quarter-section of land and gain title to it upon payment to the Government of one and a quarter dollars per acre. It was a part of the general immigration movement during that decade which settled the township to which our attention is directed in the following survey. The township is situated in the heart of south-central Minnesota and has been selected for the purposes of this study as representative of the more advanced rural townships in the State.

X. township was one of the first to be settled in this territory. This was due to its favorable location quite as much as to the contour of the county. For the most part the land is gently rolling prairie. The south-eastern quarter of the township is set off from the rest by rather steep banks running alongside of the winding course of the Prairie Creek. This area is comparatively rough and hilly. Originally it was covered with a heavy stand of choice hardwood timber, some of which still remains. The attractiveness of the fertile prairie lands was enhanced by the abundance of timber close at hand and the nearness of natural water-power. The latter was to be found at various places along the course of the Cannon River, which skirts the northwest corner of this township. It was here that the two men after whom this township was finally named built a sawmill to supply lumber for settlers coming in all around. The fall of the year 1854 marks the beginning of the early settlement.

It would not be within the limits of this brief sketch to give a detailed history of this township, picturing the hardships and dangers that these early pioneers underwent. The narratives of old settlers, taken together

with sketches of artists, have so embellished the accounts of historians that we have a very vivid picture of it all. The general features connected with the settlement of this township are the same as those of other communities of the northwest prairie regions. A few connected facts ought to be noted, however, before we proceed with the following chapters.

The census reports for 1860 show that the population in that year was 867. Nearly all of the earliest settlers were natives of New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Wisconsin. From the two last named states came most of the few Germans and Norwegians. The foreign-born people did not begin to appear in large numbers until "the better lands had been staked and filed," and so it should not be inferred from a glance at our Nationality Map that the Norwegians all took, from preference, the comparatively rough hilly land where they now are found. It may be a national characteristic of the Scandinavians to prefer wooded

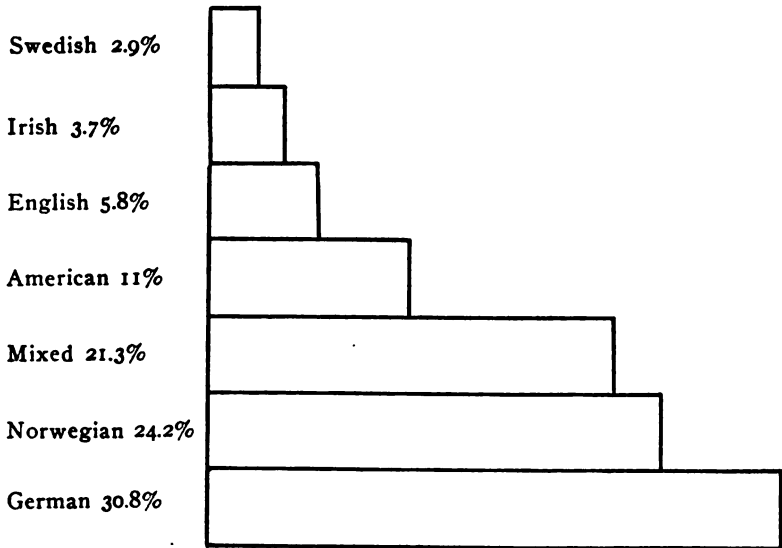
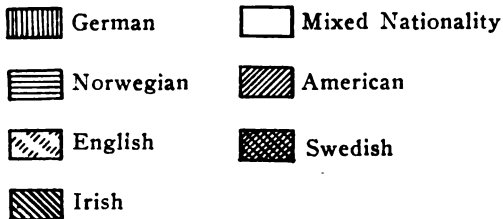
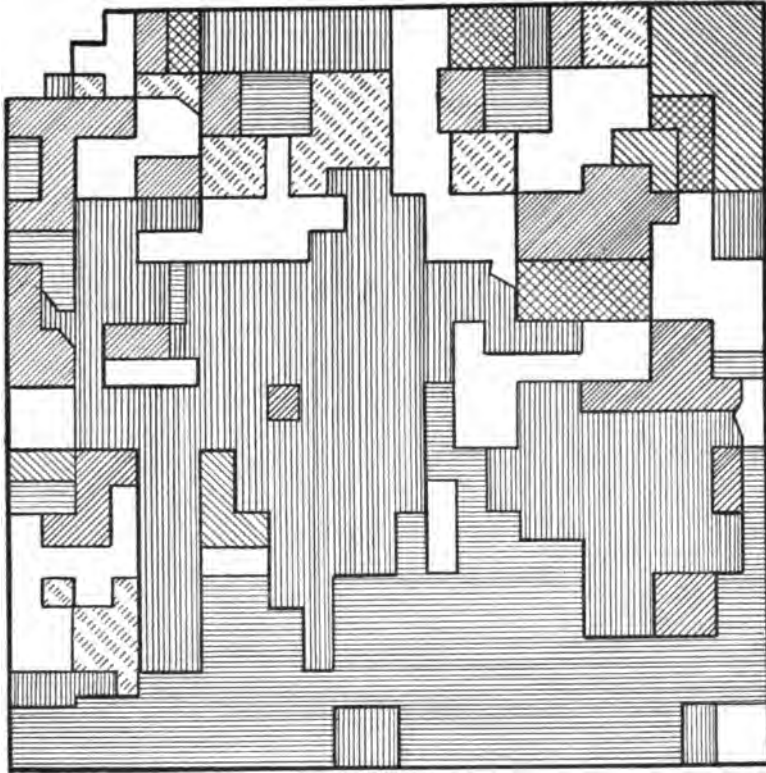


Diagram showing relative proportion of different nationalities.

lands and to build their log huts in some wooded ravine, with a near-by spring welling fresh from the hillside, but it is likely that, as one of their old settlers naïvely puts it, "they took that kind of land because it was about the only thing to be had."

A further study of the National Census Reports gives us the following facts. In 1870 the population for the entire township was 2,206. In 1880 the farming population is given distinct from that of the village for the first time. And from that time on we note a decided decrease in rural population from decade to decade, falling successively from 854 to 826 in

1890, to 764 in 1900, and to 721 in 1910. During the same time the village population grew from 2,296 to 3,265. This decrease of population is generally explained as due to the efflux from the country to the city; a part of it, however, appears to be due to the decrease of the birth-rate in



Map showing distribution of nationalities.

rural sections. Thus in 1860, when the population of the State was largely rural, the birth-rate per thousand inhabitants was 41.5. For the last five years the average birth-rate of this township was but 14.7. Again, comparing this township with the average of the State as a whole for the last five years, it further appears that, while the rate of increase (excess of



births over deaths) is  $10\frac{1}{3}$  for the State, the rate is but  $7\frac{1}{3}$  for this township.

These figures in themselves do not show all the changes that went on in this township during this time. A study of the preceding Nationality Map will show the status of the various nationalities as it is to-day. For the purposes of this map as well as for following discussions by "Americans" we mean those families where both husband and wife represent a stock of mixed blood. Mixed families are those where either one or both of the couple are of a straight unmixed descent, but where the husband and wife are of a different nationality. The other terms represent a pure stock, husband and wife of the same nationality, and are self-explanatory.

We see from this map that the dominant elements now are the Germans, the Norwegians, and the Mixed Nationalities. Although the foreign-born were not on hand to file on much of the land when it was first settled, before long they came in large numbers. The census report for 1870 shows that there were 526 foreign-born people in the township at that time. Almost all of these were to be found in the country. It is said that "not being afraid of work, they took to the soil naturally, renting from or buying out the original owners of the land, after having worked as hired help for a few years." This transferring of land from the native Americans to the foreign-born people was precipitated by the fact that many of the so-called "Yankee" settlers took up the land merely as a speculation, preferring to "try their luck at farming the farmer." Accordingly we find them "going into business, running stores, mills, and politics." At that time very few of the foreign-born element "had the training to get into these grafts."

The Nationality Map which we have just studied shows the distribution of families according to nationality, regardless of whether they be owners or renters. The Tenancy Map shows the areas rented out and operated by tenants. Approximately thirty-five per cent of the territory is run by renters. In point of numbers thirty-two per cent of the farms of this township are rented. It will thus be seen that the rented farms are larger, the average size being about 185 acres compared with 148 acres, the average size of farms operated by owners.

The ownership of the rented land is divided among twenty-two Americans, sixteen Germans, and four Norwegians. Twenty-five per cent of the owners of rented farms had never lived on these farms. Only eighteen per cent remained living on the farm. The rest retired to "city life." Fifty per cent of the total number lived in N., thirteen per cent in one of the small towns near by, and eighteen per cent in a distant city. The most general reason given for leaving the farm was that they "wanted to live in



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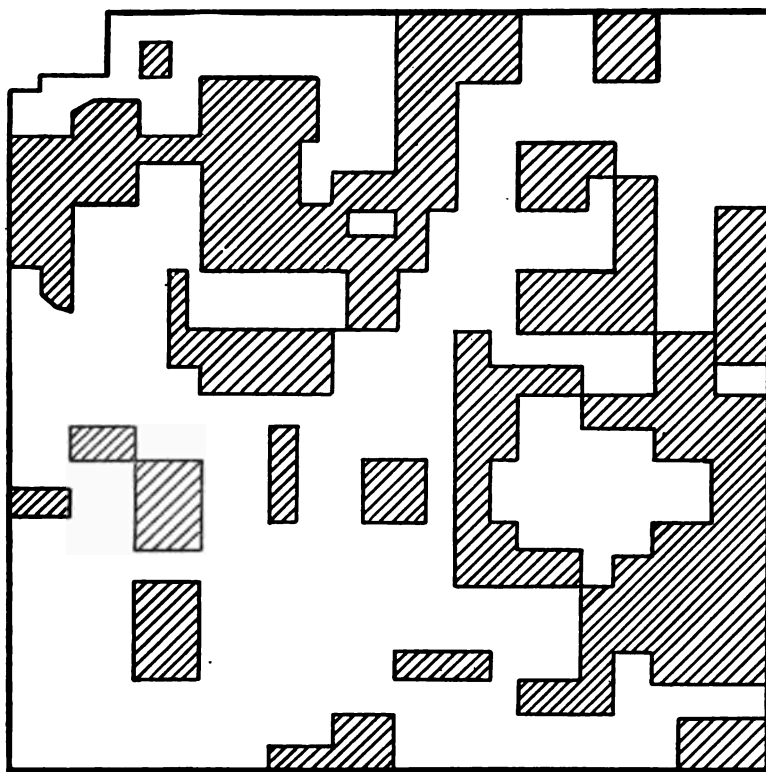
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comfort for a few years before they died"; or it "was so hard to get satisfactory help to run the farm that we found it easier to rent it out and take what we could get that way from year to year without worry and hard toil."

□ Resident owner.

▨ Tenant.



Map showing tenancy.

The nationality of the renters is represented by families as follows: seven Americans, twelve Mixed, two Swedish, nine Norwegians, and twelve Germans. Of these thirteen per cent were sons or sons-in-law. Most of these operated the farm as if it were their own, as indeed they expected it to be upon the death of their parents.

Whether it be due to the larger size of their farms or to the better managerial ability of the younger generation of farmers, it is significant to note that "in spite of what may be said against tenancy in general," in the

opinion of many of the farmers here, "if anybody is making money at farming, it is the renters."

The few old settlers who still remain have seen a big change going on since first they came here. "Farming is no longer what it used to be." Although the pioneers of this township tried a variety of farming, according to the kinds to which they had become accustomed in the particular territory whence they originally hailed, wheat farming soon became the established type for this section. The census reports for 1860 show that a considerable amount of maple sugar was produced, also buckwheat and hops. Even tobacco and rice were raised. Most of the farmers, however, saw that the kind of soil they were farming, as well as market conditions, made the raising of staple grain crops the most profitable. The exact status of this township ten years afterward is shown by the figures of the census for 1870. At that time, 19,155 acres of improved land were being farmed, practically all tillable land being under cultivation. The total farm value was \$664,415. The value of live stock was \$116,223. The wheat production for the preceding year was 126,000 bushels, almost equalling the total for the county a decade before. The estimated value of all products for that year was \$199,770, an estimated average production of \$1,250 per farm. Separate figures for this township are not given in other census reports, but the following figures for the county show the general changes that went on in this area from decade to decade.

TABLE I

Year	Number of farms	Average size acres	Tenancy per cent	Value of land and buildings	Value of buildings	Value of machinery	Amount paid for labor	Total value of farm products
1860	.....	...	..	\$ 985,955	.....	\$ 59,971	.....	.....
1870	1,570	...	..	3,584,355	.....	273,357	\$117,070	\$1,291,392
1880	2,334	188	..	6,001,613	.....	323,358	.....	1,328,696
1890	2,475	112	13	7,198,310	.....	321,230	.....	1,190,940
1900	2,672	114	16	9,976,390	\$2,307,820	475,050	158,710	2,062,018
1910	2,380	125	19	19,504,914	4,304,725	727,941	196,717	.....

TABLE 2

Table Showing Number of Farms of Various Sizes

Year	1 to 10 acres	10 to 20 acres	20 to 50 acres	50 to 100 acres	100 to 175 acres	175 to 280 acres	280 to 500 acres	Number of farms of all sizes
1870	185	272	446	341	327*	...	...	1,170
1880	46	77	336	770	1094*	...	...	2,334
1910	61	92	207	663	906	310	133	2,380

\*All farms from 100 to 500 acres

TABLE 3  
Live Stock

Year	Horses	Oxen	Milch cows	Other cattle	Total value of domestic animals
1860	989	1,174	1,911	3,249	\$ 179,817
1870	3,775	1,191	4,240	6,412	777,420
1880	7,470	413	6,622	7,003	776,124
1890	.....	93	14,236	13,295	1,132,590
1900	10,008	.....	15,678	22,740	1,443,068
1910	10,514	.....	21,273	18,200	2,435,138

TABLE 4  
Production of Leading Field Crops

Year	Wheat		Corn		Oats		Barley	
	Acres	Bushels	Acres	Bushels	Acres	Bushels	Acres	Bushels
1860	.....	130,433	.....	168,092	.....	125,545	.....	12,308
1870	.....	530,000	.....	227,931	.....	348,543	.....	36,773
1880	74,873	907,514	11,524	405,990	12,726	507,522	890	22,789
1890	30,609	1,570,450	23,437	659,494	30,876	1,014,026	1,603	31,919
1900	62,036	1,071,330	24,366	852,440	40,063	1,465,130	4,768	141,360
1910	42,800	893,000	28,682	981,292	33,967	1,250,000	16,570	468,341

The foregoing tables show how the introduction of labor-saving farm machinery in the late sixties and early seventies greatly stimulated the production of field crops, especially wheat. It also appears that, in order to be able to use this labor-saving machinery profitably, it was necessary to farm more land; hence the great increase of larger-sized farms following 1870. By 1890 we note that the acreage of wheat is less than half of what it was ten years before. A series of "chinch-bug years" was responsible for this reduction and the consequent increase of live stock. The farmers soon realized that keeping live stock, not only made farming less hazardous, but increased the yields of grain (per acre). Although we find seasonal decreases and increases of acreage, as well as yield of wheat and other grains, the amount of live stock has constantly increased. A great part of the increased valuation of live stock is due to the increase of better grades and more pure-bred stock. With this increase of live stock has gone a gradual increase in the amount of corn raised, resulting in better adjustment of farm labor during each season of the year. All in all, the changes since the early settlement have been great and revolutionary.

## WORK

Just as we have seen that the "old-timers" are right in saying that farming is "not what it used to be," so it is with the work on the farm. The early wheat farmer of the sixties or the seventies had different tasks from the present-day diversified crop or dairy farmer. The census records for the county show that in 1870 the average value of machinery per farm was but one hundred and seventy-four dollars, whereas in 1910 it had increased to three hundred and five dollars. With this increase of machinery we note a great increase of live stock from four hundred and ninety-five dollars in 1870 to one thousand and fifty dollars in 1910. According to a survey made in this township by the Farm Management Division, we find that for this township the average value is higher than for the entire county, the machinery per farm amounting to five hundred and forty-five dollars and the live stock, to eighteen hundred and ninety-nine dollars.

The importance of the increased use of machinery has been much discussed. Attention has been called to the changes wrought by the introduction of such labor-saving devices as the self-binder, hay loaders, and stackers, self-feeders, and gasoline engines for pumping, churning, and washing, until it is believed by many people that machine processes have become so extended that the present-day farmer has but to sit around all day with a wrench and oil-can in hand, from the time he starts the milking machine going in the morning until he turns off the switch of his electric power and lighting system at night. Although it is true that much of the heavy work on the farm has been made easier by the use of such machinery as the self-binder, the self-feeder on threshing machines, the manure spreader, and the riding plow, there are still many onerous tasks left. Machinery has influenced farm work greatly, but so also has the increase of live stock. This has made farm life more restraining and exacting.

The foregoing figures simply give a graphic expression of the extent to which farm work has changed since the early days of wheat farming. The work of the earlier period was more concentrated into seasons. The spring of the year was crowded with the work of plowing and seeding. This done, there was a little lull in the field work, which time was utilized by working off the road tax, and perhaps clearing a little more land from stumps or brush. Haying gave little concern, since plenty of wild grass could be put up in a little while to suffice for the needs of a yoke or two of oxen, one or two milk cows, and possibly a span of horses. The harvest season brought on the heavy work with a rush. At that time the harvesting was done by reapers, and the test of a man's stamina or staying quali-



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ties came when he was called upon "to bind his station." The big important cash-yielding labor was crowded into the brief period of a few weeks, during which time the crop was harvested and threshed. The marketing of the crop was done at leisure again in the fall of the year; and then came the short winter days during which fire-wood was worked up and rails were split for the next year's fencing.

To a large extent the farming work of to-day is seasonal, though not so much so as it was under the old all-grain type of farming. The introduction of more live stock was necessitated in the opinion of most farmers by the decreasing productiveness of continuously cropped and unfertilized lands. With this gradual change in the type of farming went a certain economy of labor as well as a more regular and less hazardous income. Instead of bunching the work into a short season of a few weeks, the men were kept busy with the care of live stock the year around. In spite of this increase in the efficient distribution of labor even the best farm manager of to-day finds that there are certain seasons of the year when work has to be rushed. Even to-day at harvest time the best of farmers are obliged to put in longer hours per day. A field of early oats ripens at the same time that barley is dead ripe, and the farmer dares not put off until to-morrow what can be done to-day.

Some years a late spring or a prolonged rainy season will put the best farm manager away behind with his work. So it was in the southeastern part of the State in the spring of 1912. Many farmers could not begin to seed until a month later than the usual time. In order to get any crop at all in such cases it is necessary to keep horses and labor going as long as they can stand it. In this way a man with ample help for ordinary seasons may be obliged to rush work all summer long, for the growing season is limited. Thus, when a field of new-mown hay is nicely cured, an impending storm necessitates keeping on hauling until darkness stops the field work for the day. It is not uncommon for town people, returning from an evening's automobile spin in the country, to see lights in barns at ten o'clock at night. If they were to stop to listen, they might hear the hum of the cream separator, the good-night refrain for the sweat-drenched, fatigued lad, who is turning the machine as the last job of the day.

True it is that such late hours are no longer the rule. The average working day is about ten hours in the field. But, as already alluded to, there are several hours required for chores. The thrifty well-to-do farmer rises at four-thirty or four-forty-five in the morning during the season of field work. The chores are done by six or six-thirty, depending upon the number of cows, and the number of hands to milk them. Breakfast is a matter of only fifteen minutes or so, and by seven o'clock every good farmer has to be starting his field work. Most farmers want their dinner regu-

larly at twelve o'clock. The housewife must have the meal ready at that time, though occasionally she will be kept waiting until one o'clock or after before the men feel that they can drop the job on hand and take time to eat. One hour's time is ordinarily allowed for dinner. This noon hour may include ten or fifteen minutes for scanning the daily paper, but there is no time for recreation. First, the horses must be fed and, then, the men wash up and sit down for their own meal. At one o'clock, or as soon after as possible, "it's get out the horses and back into the field again." The afternoon's work drags on until six o'clock, which is the approved quitting time. As we have seen, however, the chores remain to be done

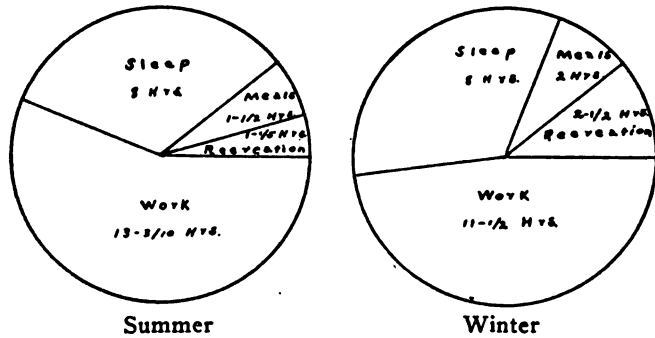
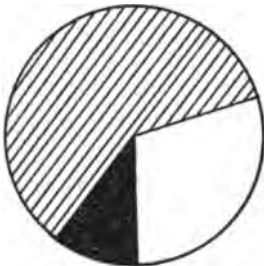


Diagram showing the average farmer's day.

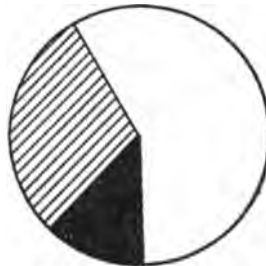
after supper is over. By eight, or eight-thirty ordinarily, most farmers are through with the day's work.

We have not yet considered the routine of tasks for the winter months. Naturally the hours of work are shorter. The keeping of high-grade dairy cattle requires regular hours, however, and the best dairymen milk their cows at the same hour in the morning and evening the year around. This necessitates a five o'clock rising hour for the winter also. Even though the work is not so toilsome during the winter months as it is in the hot, sultry weather of June or July when the hay has to be mowed away, or the barley threshed, the milk has to be taken to town every morning no matter how cold it is, and the whole day long a man is kept "puttering around" the yard doing chores. The work is finished earlier in the evening than it is in the summer, but the care of high-priced live stock prevents participation in social gatherings as of yore. "Under big-scale ranch-farming conditions, it used to be all right to trust to luck in April and then see how many lambs you could count gamboling on the meadows green in May; but a man on a present-day farm, raising pure-bred horses, cattle, and hogs, has to pass many sleepless nights in tending the dams, or his year's business will represent a loss."

We thus see how the increase of live stock on the farm represents an increase in the kind of work that can not be reduced to machine process. But few people realize the importance of this labor situation as it presents itself to the farmer of to-day. The census reports indicate how there has been a general increase of hired help in live-stock farming districts. In this township fifteen per cent of the farmers had hired help by the year, nine per cent had help by the month over four months but less than a year, eight per cent by the month less than four months, and thirty-four per cent hired day labor. Of the total number of farmers twenty-three per cent found it their "biggest problem to get satisfactory help." There is more and more of a demand for the kind of laborers upon whom the farmer may depend absolutely. Besides physical strength, the present-day system of farming demands a willingness to work irregular hours and a genuine personal interest in the work on hand. Farmers who keep pure-bred dairy herds must have help the year around; and any kind of hired help will no longer do. The farm laborer must be a man who is painstaking and gentle in working with the herd. There is so much in this alone that some of the best breeders say "no milking machine, however perfect it may be mechanically, will ever be able to replace the human hand, just because of the productivity due to the friendly relation between the cow and the milker." Thus it is that, in the opinion of many, "the hired-help problem is the biggest problem confronting the farmer."



**Cistern Water**  
63% have cistern water in house  
9% have cistern water outside of house



**Drinking Water**  
59% within 5 rods of house  
29% over 5 rods from house  
12% in house

Diagram showing conveniences of water supply.

Up to this point we have given no attention to woman's work on the farm. Her tasks are different in the main from those of the men; hence they can best be considered separately.

Woman's work, too, has changed from what it used to be. At first thought many of the country women are inclined to deny this, but at a second consideration they see that it is so. Though the routine of house-

hold duties is much the same as it used to be, there have been modifications. Soft water, running water, furnaces, modern range stoves, oil stoves, and gasoline engines are some of the innovations that have tended to make housework more congenial. The following figures show the percentage of homes into which certain conveniences have been introduced: oil stoves, fifty-seven; furnaces, fifteen; hard-coal stoves, forty-four; soft-coal heaters, thirty-one; washing machines, thirty-three; washing machines run by engine, ten; drinking water in house, eleven; soft water in the house, sixty-three; soft water beside house, ten. Food purchased: canned vegetables, sixteen; fruit, fifty-four; fresh meat, fifty-nine; prepared breakfast food, thirty-three.

There are fewer washing machines in use now than there used to be. Those who have quit using them say that badly soiled clothes, like men's overalls and shirts, can not be thoroughly cleansed by the ordinary machine, and fine garments such as lingerie may be torn by a machine.

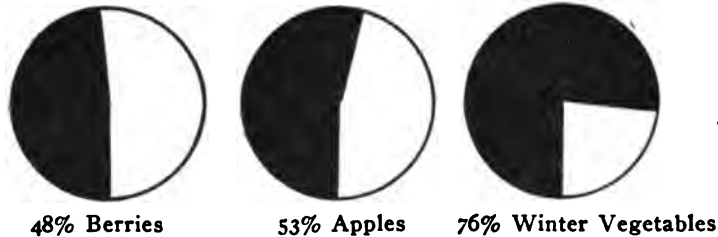


Diagram showing percentage of homes producing various supplies on farm.

Just as the farmer is getting skilled labor to do special jobs, such as concrete cement work, masonry, carpentry, and painting, because he has not the time to do things besides his regular routine work, so his wife is more and more "letting out" some of the work she formerly was obliged to do herself. Six per cent of the families have their sewing done by a professional seamstress, usually some young woman who lives in the country, going the rounds from family to family. This does not mean, however, that all of the sewing is thus done by the seamstress. The everyday clothes of the women and children are almost always made by the housewife herself. There are forty-one per cent of the families in which all of the tailoring or sewing is done by the housewife.

So also there are but few households of to-day where the housewife does the churning. Only twelve per cent do that. Most farmers get their butter from the creamery. This is a big relief for many overworked housewives. In hot weather it is very hard to make good butter without ice, and not a single farmer had ice in storage. A few households buy canned vegetables and fruit and thus save work for the women; yet there

seems to be no distinct tendency in this direction. Nearly all of the farmers have gardens of their own, or get their vegetables and berries from neighbors, and do their own canning and preserving.

With household duties are usually included the care of chickens and the garden work. In almost every case where they have a garden, the women had at least to help tend it. So, also, if they wanted their front yards to look tidy, they themselves had to run the lawn-mower. In twenty-nine per cent of the homes this was done; and the yards in the country averaged twenty square rods, or one eighth of an acre.

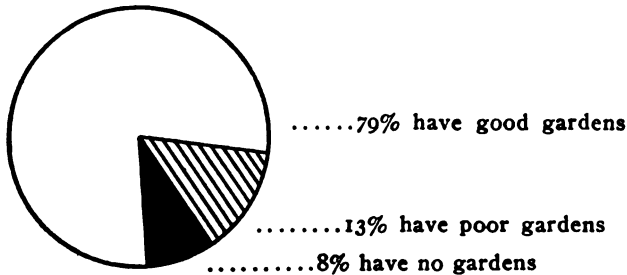
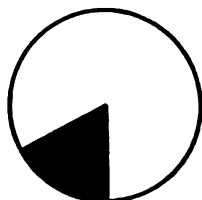


Diagram showing percentage of homes having good and poor gardens.

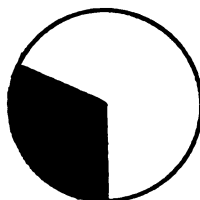
With all these heavy outside tasks as a part of the regular household duties it is clear that the women are not run down from lack of exercise. Even the indoor work is of the heaviest nature. There are big milk cans, separator, and all the milking utensils to cleanse by washing and rinsing with boiling hot water. This morning task itself together with doing the dishes lasts for an hour in many places. There is always much sweeping to be done, for feet can not be kept clean in fields and barnyards. Preparing dinner is no longer the simple work it used to be. A woman has to be able to put up a little variety nowadays, although pork, potatoes, and gravy together with butter-bread, and coffee, are still the main diet of the toiling farmer. Although there may be endless distractions, such as medicine men, picture men, and University fellows, or just plain tramps, interfering with her work, a good housewife has to be able to attend to all this and yet get dinner ready on time. Nothing could be much more of an offense to her good husband than that she should accidentally keep a hungry score of threshing men waiting for their noonday meal. In only ten per cent of the places was a hired girl kept. Sixty-nine per cent of the families were without any girl-help of sixteen years of age or over, and in forty-six per cent of the families there were from one to four children under seven years of age who required care to keep them safe from mischief and out of harm's way. Thus the good women are kept "on the go" from five o'clock in the morning until nine at night. Even after the

men have gone to bed, the devoted mother has to put away her sleepy "flock of little ones"; and after that perhaps mend some torn garments in order that they may be ready in the morning, when at day-break the same drudgery begins all over again.

So far we have considered only the routine of the regular household duties. There are a considerable number of homes, however, in which the women are obliged to help with the outdoor men's work. Besides the garden work and the care of chickens, which we have seen is general, there were in this township thirty-two per cent of the families in which the women helped with the milking and the general barnyard chores. On sixteen per cent of these farms the women helped in the field work. This heavy outdoor work is naturally done on farms where there is more than one woman in the home. Thus, out of the sixteen per cent of the places



16% in field



32% do milking



71% work in garden



79% have care of poultry

Diagrams showing percentage of homes in which women do work outside of house.

where women work in the field, eighty-two per cent represent homes where there are daughters over sixteen years of age. A total of twenty per cent of the families have girls of sixteen or over. In each case where there were two daughters of this age, the women helped with field or chore work.

The work that the women do in the fields is not of the lighter or easier kind of work, as might be supposed. Usually the woman is a poor machinist. It is not thought that she can run a harvesting machine; or it may not be considered safe to let her drive horses; hence it is usually she who cocks the hay or shocks the barley, the scratching beards of which cover the body with the dreaded prickling "barley itch." Some women even stack or pitch bundles. All these jobs are of the very hardest work on the farm.

Lest unwarranted pity be evoked, it should be stated that most of this

help on the part of the women is rendered freely, ungrudgingly, if not cheerfully. True it is that it is distasteful to the young girls as a rule, but they seem "obliged to help because hired men are not to be had for love or for money"; or it seems that "the only way to save and lay by any money for old age," or "to give the young ones a start," is for every one to "pitch in and dig for all they can stand."

In spite of these facts there are those who wail: "They don't make the kind of men and women that they used to any more. Our young men are getting to be weaklings and our women, pampered idlers." It is true that women no longer do so much outdoor, field, or barnyard work as they used to do. There seems to be a growing sentiment that "a housewife can not do field work, help choring around the barns, and at the same time keep the house the way it ought to be kept." On the large majority of farms, however, as we have seen, there is little evidence of "pampering and idleness."

These facts lead us to the consideration of the effects of these changes in the conditions of country work as regards the present, as well as the growing generations, the efflux of the youth of the country, and the labor problem as it confronts the farmer. All these things, however, are further affected by other influences than work; hence we shall postpone the consideration of them until later chapters.

## BUSINESS RELATIONS

The early settlers of this township had to do their marketing at river ports. Red Wing and Hastings, about thirty miles distant, were the nearest places on the Mississippi River to which supplies of machinery, clothing, and groceries were brought up from Chicago, St. Louis, and other primary markets on the river below. To these places farmers brought their staples, such as wheat, potatoes, onions, and whatever salable articles they produced. It is estimated that Winona, Wabasha, Red Wing, and Hastings shipped an aggregate of three million bushels of wheat and flour in the year 1861. This was before the milling industry had fairly begun up the river at St. Anthony Falls, so practically all the wheat was shipped downstream to be milled at St. Louis or eastern cities.

Thus we find that the early settlers of this township had to haul their products thirty miles in order to get them to a market. To get his load on the market early in the morning the farmer would leave home at about four o'clock the preceding afternoon. Following the winding trails along the divides, he travelled all night and got to the market place at about three o'clock A.M. the next day. After feeding his oxen, he might sleep

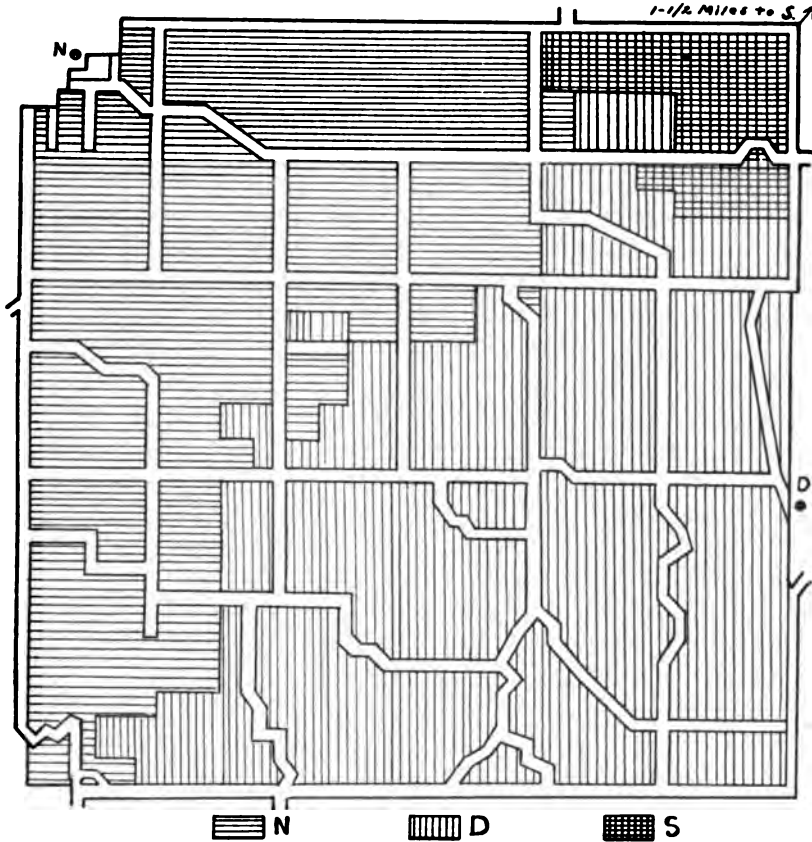


until four-thirty when it was time to look up buyers. Brokers or commission men from eastern mills and exporters were on hand in great numbers. This was before there were any deals in futures to steady and govern prices; hence, there were often great fluctuations from week to week and wide disparities between prices received by different farmers selling in the same market-place. Considerable time would be spent haggling with the various buyers, before the load was finally sold. By this time it would be daylight, and the farmer would yoke his oxen, draw the load to the wharf or wherever the buyer wanted it. The grain was unloaded and piled away on a river barge or stacked in large heaps along the bank until such a time as it might be "toted" down-stream. These were before the days of grain elevators and warehouses, and grain was kept in sacks both in storage and in transit.

Such was the market condition until the railroad was built into this country. Although the grading had been done from Mendota to Faribault "before the war," it was not until 1865 that trains were run. That was the beginning of a big change in market conditions. Naturally, elevators and warehouses were soon built and grain could be gotten to market more easily. Since that time marketing of the farm produce has been done in much the same way as it is done to-day. There is this difference, however, that, while in the seventies and the eighties the farming was pretty largely of the all-grain type, and, hence, the crops were marketed soon after threshing was done, to-day most of the grain is fed to live stock and thus marketed on hoof. There is no longer that "fall rush" to sell the grain in order to meet financial obligations. Nearly all of the farms to-day have ample granary room in which to keep their crop as long as they care to. Only twenty-one per cent of the farmers sell early in the fall and seventy-eight per cent of these are renters. Half of the renters, however, market their spare grain in the winter or spring according as market prices and roads seem to be satisfactory. Most of the grain is sold in the winter. Only thirteen per cent of the farmers keep their grain to be hauled in the spring after seeding is over.

There are now five local railway stations to which the farmers of this township take their products to be marketed. Two of these towns are located on the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul, and the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroads. N., the largest of the local towns, is also connected with Minneapolis by a regular service of four trains a day on the "Dan Patch Air Line," as well as being on the Chicago Great Western, and the two aforementioned steam railway systems. Along the eastern side of the township runs another branch of the Chicago Great Western. On this line at distances of four and a half and five miles are the other

three stations, which draw supplies from farmers of this township. All five of these stations are within two and a half or three hours' distance from St. Paul and Minneapolis. And, as has been seen, the various great railway systems put the farmers of this township as well as the towns-



Map showing territory from which grain is marketed to various stations.

people of these stations into the best of connections with Chicago and other great primary markets towards the South.

Thus it is that, while the Twin Cities are the natural market for the products of this farming section, Chicago and Milwaukee are competing markets within easy access to the farmers or shippers. Both of the older towns on the Cannon River still have flour and grist mills in operation. Although they find it hard to compete with the big mills of Minneapolis, they manage to keep running and for high-grade blue stem, No. 1 Northern wheat, they pay several cents more per bushel than the elevator companies offer. Their flour is mostly sold locally. Dairy business in this country

offers a ready market for bran, shorts, and middlings. Both N., in the northwest corner of the township, and D., in the middle of the eastern township line, have farmers' elevators which handle most of the grain. Local prices are thus kept near what they ought to be in view of central market quotations. As to just which elevator gets the most grain depends quite as much upon the contour of the surrounding country, and accessibility according to the condition of roads as it does on managerial ability and prices offered by the competing companies. A glance at the preceding chart will show where the grain is usually marketed.

The cost of hauling grain to the elevator has been computed by taking distance travelled, time, and cost of man and horse labor, as follows: For this township the average distance hauled was three and one-seventh miles; the average size of load was one and one-fourteenth tons in winter and two tons in the fall with good roads. Time required in winter is three and two-sevenths hours; in fall two and three-fifths hours. Figuring man labor at fifteen cents per hour and horse labor at eight cents per hour, we get an average cost of thirty and three-tenths cents per ton mile where grain is hauled in winter, and a cost of only twelve and eight-tenths cents per ton mile where it is hauled in the fall by good roads. As the average number of loads of grain taken to market is fifteen per farm, and hence an average of ninety-four ton miles of traffic with grain, a considerable saving might be figured. Thus, on the farms from which these averages were computed, the cost of marketing at thirty and three-tenths ton mile in winter is twenty-eight dollars and fifty-two cents and on the basis of what they hauled in the fall by good roads, the cost at the rate of twelve and eight-tenths per ton mile would have been only twelve dollars and nine cents. In other words, on the above basis sixteen dollars and forty-three cents might have been saved if crops had been marketed by good roads. The farmer does not figure it this way however. In the winter his horses have not much other work and they need the exercise. He has to go to town once or twice a week anyhow, and he might as well take the grain down little by little. In that way he does not figure labor at much either. Hence, to him it appears cheaper to market in the winter time.

Just as the farmers took a hand in marketing their grain, so they have made various attempts to handle their dairy product, and look after its final disposition. There are farmers' creameries throughout the country doing a flourishing business. Owing largely to the excellent shipping facilities and the nearness to the Twin City market, the farmers of this township have found it difficult to compete with centralizing plants and local depots within easy access of the farmers of this township. These local farmers' creameries seem to find the odds pretty much against them on account of not having the marketing equipment in the cities that the big

milk companies have, and being thus compelled to manufacture cheese and butter. The milk companies established cooling plants and local depots easily accessible to the farmers of this township. There is a cooling plant

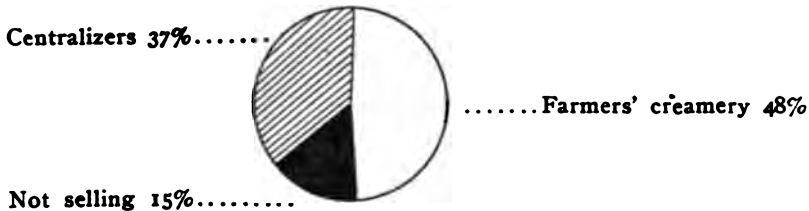
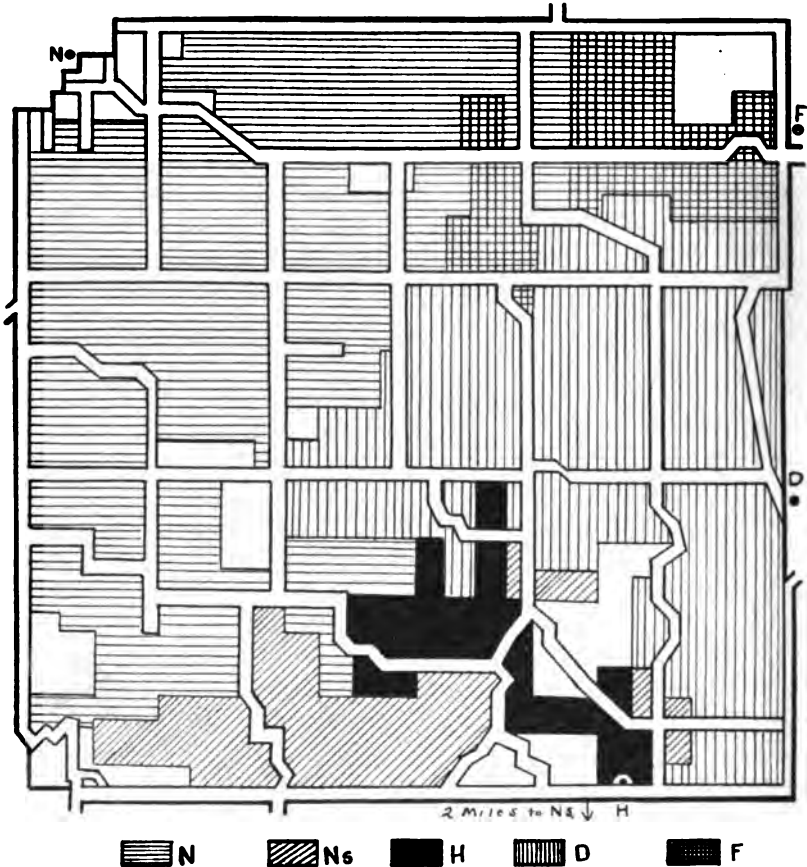


Diagram showing method of disposal of dairy products.

at both N. and D. and between Ds. and N. is one depot, or milk station. On the east are two more, between Ns. and D. and D. and S. These milk depots or stations are mere platforms or old box cars beside the track. In the busy rush of the summer work farmers find it very convenient to take their milk to these near-by depots. (See map showing how the territory is divided among the various stations.) The average distance of hauling milk or cream is two and seven-ninths miles and the time required is two and five-ninths hours. Hauling to local depots requires but little time. During the rush season, in forty-five per cent of the places, the women or children haul the milk. A special milk train gathers up the milk at these depots and cooling plants, and gets it up to the centralizing plant in the city where it is sterilized, cooled, and kept until the next morning, at which time it is distributed to the patrons of the milk companies in the city. The farmer gets his empty cans back the next morning at the station where they are left by an evening local train, the cans being returned that were taken up in the morning. In spite of the advantages of the city milk companies there have been farmers' creameries in operation at both N. and Ns. for a number of years and another one has just been started at D. this last summer. The farmers near that town had been getting a cent or two less per gallon for their milk than did the farmers of N. and S. So they concluded that the only way to get equitable prices is to "force the situation through coöperative organizations."

In the selling of live stock the farmers of this township all seemed satisfied with existing conditions. No coöperative live-stock marketing associations were in operation at any of the stations. A few of the farmers who had a carload of hogs or steers had shipped them to South St. Paul or Chicago at various times, but as a whole they felt that rather than take any chances on a drop in the market, they would sell to the local buyers. "Of course, they are making their living off the farmers, but they lose once in a while too." This sentiment of wanting to be safe keeps the farm-

ers on good terms with the local cattle buyer. Moreover, the average farmer is not as good a judge of market classes and grades of live stock as he is of grain. Oftentimes a local buyer will pick up a mixed lot of steers at a safe margin on "mediums," when some of the animals may sell as "choice" or "prime" in the market. That is where most of his profits are made. In the hog business the differences in grades are usually not so great, and hogs are usually handled, it is said, at less profit.



Map showing territory from which dairy products are marketed to various stations.

The farmers of this township who raise Holstein cattle have an exceptional advantage in the marketing world over their neighbors who raise a different breed of cattle. The country around N. has won a national fame among dairymen as "the Home of the Pure-Bred Holstein Cows." As a result of this fame the owner of Holstein cattle, and even those who have only the Holstein crosses, "grades," and "scrubs," are getting high prices from buyers who come from every part of the United States. This last



Herds Like These Have Made This Community Famous.



The Farmer on This Side of the Road Keeps No Cattle. "They Demand Too Much Work the Year Around."

THE W. H. R.  
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ALL CHURCH AND  
T. D. W. FOUNDATIONS

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summer the government of Japan had agents in this community buying up all the cattle they could get, at prices that seemed fabulous to some of the old-time breeders of native stock. There are farmers of good high-class pure-bred stock, of Shorthorn, Jersey, or Guernsey breeds, but these command no such prices as the "Holstein people" get, simply because their community is not advertised for these breeds.

Just as we have seen that the advent of the railroad in 1865 made a big change in the method of marketing farm products, so it changed the old method of buying for the farmers. Whereas, there used to be numerous cross-road post-offices and general merchandise stores, the beginning of railway traffic soon gave a decided advantage to those merchants whose stores were located at the railway station. Gradually the cross-road stores went out of business. The advent of the rural free mail delivery service finally did away with practically all of them. The lone country store is now a thing of the past in this part of the country.

The city of N. on the northwest corner of the township has already been referred to as the largest of the five towns to which the farmers of this township have easy access. As we have seen, from the standpoint of marketing farm products N. does not seem to have the advantage of the smaller towns except perhaps in the matter of milk shipping. Indeed, it appears that the little town of D. with only one hundred and eighty-four inhabitants is getting some of the grain and live stock from the territory that would seem to belong to N. The hilly roads toward N. are the main cause for this. On the other hand, N. has a big advantage due largely to its size. People come to this town from as far as fifteen miles distant in order to get a choice from a variety of things. Practically all the millinery, ladies' coats and furs, as well as men's ready-made garments are bought at N. because the farmers' daughters are beginning to follow styles more from year to year. At church socials and fairs it is quite impossible to tell a town girl from her modish country cousin.

Whereas it is a distinct advantage for the merchants of N. to have within its city limits two colleges which together enroll about one thousand students, there seems to have grown up among many of the farmers a certain antagonism as a result of the development of this distinctly "city-toned social life" along with the growth of these educational institutions. There used to be a time "when John Tompkins, the grocer, used to drive out to Ed. Schimmerhorn's on Sunday afternoons and then go over to a neighbor's pasture to play a game of baseball, while the women-folks remained at home to visit, and get a good supper ready for the men and boys." Old settlers still hark back with much pleasure to "those days when town and country people were so much alike." Now the "merchants, are getting so high-toned that we never get to see their families any more,

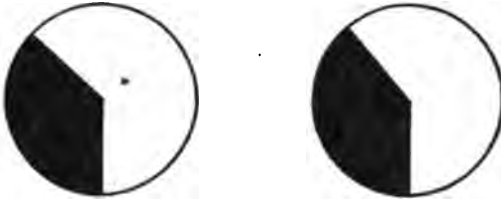


unless we chance to get just a glimpse of them and hear them gaily laugh as they speed along in their automobiles after having run over one of our clucks with her flock of little chickens."

With the merchants of the smaller towns there seems to be a more intimate understanding. The farmers feel perfectly at ease with the store-keepers, many of whom own farms themselves. The banker as well as the grocer and hardware man stand around with coats off, sleeves rolled up, "talking over" topics of common interest, "just like farmers themselves." Although they do not have the choice of goods here that they have at N., they prefer to get their machinery, hardware of all kinds, groceries, shoes, and working clothes at these smaller places, mostly because they feel that the merchants at these smaller places are not "getting rich off from us." There is much trade turned to D. by the big hills and the general slope of the country in that direction, which tends to draw the grain business that way; but at other times it is something besides roads that keeps some of the farmers patronizing these smaller towns. "Who is it," they ask, "that pays for all those electric-lighted show windows, those high-toned clerks, and all that style that those city merchants are putting on?"

Peddlers still do a very considerable amount of business in many homes. There are four distinct medicine companies that send a man around once or twice a year. All of these "wagons" are selling patent medicines and spices and perfumes, salves, and toilet articles and "are making money on it." Besides these perennial medicine men there is another peddler doing business among the people of this community who deserves special attention. He has "a regular general merchandise store on wheels." His wagon is loaded down with ready-made, end-of-season, job-lot sales which he sells to the men and women of the country at prices "much cheaper than our town merchants." This particular peddler has worked up a regular patronage in the country. He moves about leisurely from one place to another, taking meals with the farmers, and staying overnight. In this way he not only cuts down his general or supplementary costs by giving cheap jewelry and little notions to the children as presents for the "keep of his team and himself," but at the same time he is getting intimately acquainted with the needs and wants of the families with which he comes into such close contact. In chatting with the various members of the family in the evening he not only gains their confidence and good will, but learns exactly what they want, and he tells them that he will look it up for them when he gets to the cities the next time. In that way he really is taking orders for his next coming although they are not conscious of having given him an order; the matter is regarded merely as a personal favor, and not as a business contract. Thus it is that this peddler can sell so much cheaper than the local merchants, and that in many homes he supplies almost everything except groceries and farm machinery. The gayly

colored neckties and the tawdry jewelry he sells are cheap, but please the young people to whom he caters. The suits he sells to the farmer may be of a cut that is long out of style, but it usually has the weight and feel that indicates good wear, and that is the all-important quality for his farmer customer. He frankly tells his patrons that he is making good money at his business, explaining it in the economies due to the fact that he has to pay but sixty dollars license per year, and has no expense in the way of taxation on his stock, or rents, or clerk hire, or costly electrically illuminated show-windows, or advertising.



37% buy from peddler

38% buy from catalogue houses

Diagram showing percentage of families buying from peddlers and catalogue houses.

This peddler, as already mentioned, enters very intimately into social relationship with various families who are his patrons. Among the children he has pets to whom he sends colored post-cards or little presents on their birthdays. Or if death brings bereavement into a family circle, he is pretty sure to know about it, and to express his sympathy by a note of condolence and a floral wreath. In the words of one of his patrons, "show me the town merchant who cares that much for us."

Another favorite method of buying for many farmers is by means of competitive bidding at auction sales. It is not very popular with many of the newer generation however. So, also, with the housewives of the older generation. They not only know their own business, but usually are better economists than their husbands, and it is they who call attention to the folly of buying "a lot of old, nearly worn-out machinery and truck that never will be used." In spite of this domestic difference upon the wisdom of buying at auction sales, these are nevertheless still very popular. This is so largely because a man's advantage in the market world is pretty well defined by his knowledge of values. The farmer is a poor judge of values, as a rule. At these sales he needn't trust entirely to his own judgment, but he can guide himself by the judgment of other farmers. Often an article will be "run up" away above what its market value should be, each bidder trusting, not to his own evaluation of the article, but rather to the thought that "if it is worth that much to the other bidder, it's worth fully as much to me." Hence the wrath of the buyer when he finds

out that the other party was not a bona fide bidder in the market, but merely a "bidder-in." In such an event he feels "done," because he has no confidence in his own judgment as to the value of the plow or horse that he bid up. If the other fellow had been an actual buyer, he would have been satisfied that he hadn't paid too much for his purchase.

It is stated by station agents and others who are in a position to know, that the amount of business done by farmers with mail order firms is decreasing. However that may be, the amount of business that thus escapes local merchants seemed to be but little. There were thirty-two per cent of the farmers who had ordered something from a catalogue house within the year. Nearly all of these stated that the orders were small. Only in a few places had they ordered goods to the extent of twenty dollars. In most cases orders were sent during the winter when the boys and girls put in some of their time studying catalogues and seeing for how little they might get a rifle or some knickknacks, and then perhaps father and mother would try to help cut down the freight or express charges by including a little order for a few dollars' worth of prunes, coffee, or herring, or pos-

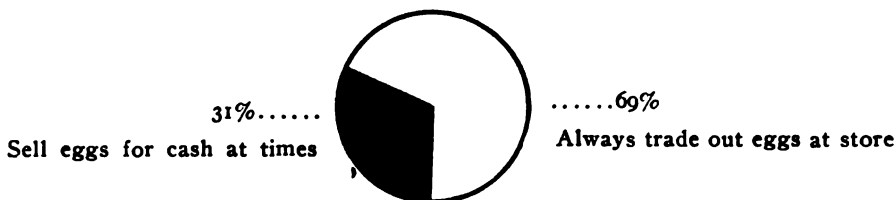


Diagram showing method of disposal of eggs.

sibly a saw or hammer which could be had cheaper than they could buy it at home. As a general thing, however, it was admitted that catalogue-house service on the whole was not entirely satisfactory. "It is always better to see what you are getting." Others seemed to feel that it is hardly fair to "take your eggs to local merchants to trade in for goods in summer, and run your credit when you haven't got any, and then when you have ready money in fall or winter send it away to Montsears and Wardbuck." There were only twenty-six per cent of the farmers who ever sold eggs for cash, and with most of them it is only for a short while each year when they have a big supply of eggs that they sell their surplus for cash. Most farmers' wives prefer to take the eggs to their merchant, for he will usually give them one cent more per dozen than the local cash buyer pays. With the egg-trade goes a big amount of credit business. While forty-two per cent of the farmers' wives maintained that they never ran any account at the store, there were fifty-eight per cent of the housewives who did and forty-six per cent of the women who transacted their business on credit with monthly settlements. Thus it will be seen that the local mer-

chant looks askance at any scheme to put the farmers on more of a cash basis. It is by means of this egg-trading business that he insures himself against the competition of catalogue houses. He extends credit when hens are not laying well and gets even when the egg season is on, or when the farmer pays the balance from the cash returns of his monthly milk-check.

The business done with banks is limited pretty largely to loans on real estate. Farm machinery is usually bought for cash, or credit is granted by the firm making the sale. It is said that three months' time is usually given at the same price as a strictly cash sale. Keen farmers are known to have received a five-dollar discount on a sixty-dollar plow for spot cash. Thus it may be inferred that the on-time buyers are paying a pretty high rate of interest in many instances. To practically all the farmers the credit situation was satisfactory. The prevailing rate at the bank is six per cent for a long-time loan with a good first-mortgage security. Short-time loans are seldom demanded, only a few isolated cases being noted and then money was hired for three or four months at eight per cent. It seemed that not one farmer had ever heard of the new Agricultural Credit agitation. They did not see any need for any more credit. Only three farmers seemed to be free from the notion generally held that the use of credit by a farmer in his farming business is something to be avoided, something to be gotten rid of as soon as conditions will permit.

Only a few women had ever availed themselves of a day's trip to the Twin Cities to do any shopping. In sixteen per cent of the places, the wife or husband had done the buying of clothes or other supplies either at State Fair time, or some other occasion.

It is difficult to generalize about the farmer's attitude toward the world of business in general. There are a number of farmers in every community who have a practical insight into affairs and who understand markets and business in general quite as well as any other well-informed business man. Indeed, it seems that with the spread of daily newspapers, whose market quotations are being studied more and more by the young generation, the views held by the majority of the farmers of to-day will be supplanted by a clearer comprehension in the next generation.

To-day, with many farmers "prices are what they are simply because town men won't pay more." To these farmers there is but little meaning in an attempted explanation of how world-wide crop conditions are weighed against an estimated demand in order to facilitate marketing at steady world prices. Others, while they have the idea that crop conditions elsewhere contribute towards a fixing of prices, do not understand that one or two localities alone have but little influence on such a staple as wheat. One farmer in boasting of how shrewd he was last year to hit the highest price on wheat, very generously admitted that he "had gotten some inside

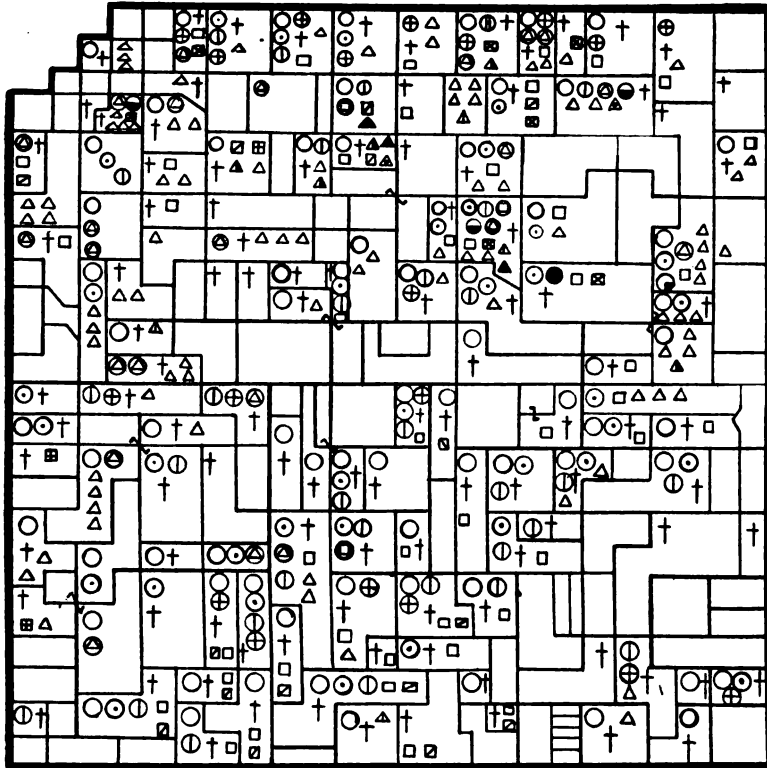
information from a brother-in-law in California." That fellow wrote that "the crop was poor out there, too." Putting these two personal observations together, he felt that he had a good line on what the price would be.

The typical farmer's notion of marketing is that here is a world in which one man's gain is another man's loss, where sharp wits, unscrupulous representations, and masked thievery reign supreme. As long as he is selling locally, and the thing he is selling is used or consumed in the community where it is sold he feels sure of himself, confident of his own shrewdness, and his ability to hold his own with the man he knows. He readily sees for example how the local butcher must needs sell for more than he pays in order to make his living and provide for his family. In deals of this kind, where the buyer is known to him personally and where the thing sold will be used locally, he will indeed bargain and haggle to his best ability, but he never gives his word or hand on a bargain of which it can be shown that he stooped to dishonesty. When it comes to selling in a wider market, however, if, for example, a carload of supposedly high-graded milch cows are being bought to be shipped out of town, or a horse is bought for a distant party, then his business ethics is strained and stretched in direct proportion to the scope of the market. In such dealings the old saw seems to be twisted into something as follows: "Be honest as long as it is the best policy." Such matters as selling veal only a few days old, when the law requires it to be six weeks old, and dumping in a poorer grade of grain than the sample on which the contract was based, readily suggest themselves as a few of the common practices in regard to this matter of "uncommon honesty." It is not to be inferred from this that the farmer has become morally degenerate and unscrupulous beyond other business men. Not at all. At least a partial explanation for this ethics is found in the fact that in face of a world market, with the various agencies and machinery of distribution between him and the ultimate consumer, he loses that sense of personal responsibility which he feels in dealing directly with the consumer. The workings of boards of trade, and chambers of commerce, and the function of deals in futures, are all an utter mystery to him. Somehow he feels that he is completely at the mercy of some power, some system, which controls this market. Why should he feel compunctions about some little misrepresentations, when, as he puts it, "that is the way of the business world"?

### FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS

In the preceding chapters we noted the prevalence of the opinion that through the machinations of some system the conditions of the market and of the business world in general are against the farmer. "A man with

all his family may toil the whole year around, digging and scraping together as much as he can, and then when he gets ready to sell what he has, he must take whatever is offered him, even if that is less than what it cost him to produce the thing." It is felt that "this is not just," and yet "a man would be a fool to hold out against these conditions; everything is against the farmer." This conviction has led a few to keep out of the



Economic

Religious, Social, and Educational

- Mutual Insurance.
- ◉ Creameries.
- ⊖ Elevators.
- ⊕ Farmers' Telephone.
- ⊗ Dairymen's & Breeders' Ass'n.
- ⊠ Wool Growers' Ass'n.
- ⊙ Statistical Route.
- Stock Company.
- Co-operative Store.
- ⊙ Am. Society of Equity.

- † Church.
- Ladies' Aid.
- ⊠ Young People's Society.
- ⊞ Sunday School.
- ⊞ Missionary Society.
- △ Lodge.
- ▲ Magazine Club.
- ▲ Town and Country Club.
- ▲ Literary Society.
- ▲ W. C. T. U.

Map showing organization membership on each farm.

market as much as possible, to "produce as much as they can of the things they need for their family and sell and buy only those things they can not make themselves." Thus only, it is held, can they well prevent any one from taking the fruits of their labor. "The only thing a farmer can do is to scratch and save."

That such a method of meeting the adverse conditions of the business world is not general, however, is evinced by the growth and spread of farmers' organizations. These represent the various ways in which farmers have banded together to get "what could not be gotten single-handed." "In protection and furtherance of our own interest, we were led to do it." The Organization Map gives a graphic representation of the distribution of shares in all the farmers' stock companies, as well as membership in mutual insurance societies, and social and religious organizations of all kinds. In this chapter we will confine our consideration to the economic organizations only. To facilitate recognition of these on the map, all have been designated by some character founded on a circle. The following table gives the distribution of membership for certain organizations among land proprietors as compared with renters.

*Membership in*

	Tenants per cent	Owners per cent
Creamery .....	14	35
Elevator .....	9	31
Insurance .....	32	57
Telephone .....	9	10
Breeders' Association .....	..	14

The lower percentage of membership among renters is explained by the fact that their tenancy is not secure. They "do not know how long they may stay in the neighborhood"; hence, they "do not care to tie themselves up in anything which may prove expensive, and whose benefits they may get without being members."

There is but one member of the American Society of Equity, at least only one man seemed to remember belonging to it. Nor was there any evidence of Grange activity or membership in the township. "There used to be, but it has all died out."

The membership in farmers' elevators in this township is divided between the one at N. and the one at D. Both of these elevators are in reality farmers' stock companies although they are called coöperative companies. The dividends are divided among the stockholders only, and membership is not limited to farmers. Both companies have been operating very successfully and it is generally admitted that since their organization farmers have been getting more nearly the prices that central-market quotations would warrant, than they used to with only the line elevators in town. Yet objection is made by some that even the farmers' elevators are run

on too much of a money-making basis. Dividends range from ten to twenty per cent annually. The shareholders and directors maintained that they were doing most for the cause of farmers' coöperation by making the business pay well for those who had put their money into it. "In that way those who are always mistrustful and holding back will be more apt to back another farmers' movement when one is started."

There are three mutual farmers' insurance associations which have membership in this township. They insure against losses by fire and lightning only. A glance at the foregoing percentages and the Organization Map will show that there are many tenant farms which have no membership in an insurance company. This simply means that the tenant does not have any insurance in a mutual company. The owner of tenant farms usually does have. Thus the membership in these organizations is larger than our figures indicate.



Diagram showing membership in leading farmers' organizations.

These mutual insurance associations are all doing well; not a single farmer in the township, however much he declaimed against coöperation in general, had a word against mutual insurance as carried on by the farmers. One of the members of the Walcott Farmers' Mutual Insurance Company produced figures showing that the association had saved its members the sum of forty-seven thousand dollars during the seventeen years that it has been organized; i. e., if its members had carried a like amount of insurance with one of the old line companies, the premiums would have amounted to forty-seven thousand dollars more than the fees and assessments did with their own company. Members of another township mutual insurance company boast of the proud record of not a single assessment since they were organized over ten years ago. A director of one of these companies gave as his opinion that the reason insurance is so successfully handled by the farmers themselves is because "the whole thing is a matter of playing safe, there is no chance for any profit-making graft to enter into a thing of this kind, the way we are organized." As a result there are chosen as directors men who really consider it an honor to serve the association as directors; "there is no underhand work of any kind possible."

It seems that the Farmers' Telephone Company was organized in order to get for a large number of farmers who were scattered here and there,



the telephone service which they could not get from the big privately owned telephone company. This farmers' company seems to have been operating very successfully although it has met with a great many difficulties and considerable opposition.

To start with, the company had a long-continued fight to get a franchise from the city of N. The farmers alleged that councilmen had shares in the big telephone company and, hence, opposed the development of the farmers' line. The reason given by the council seems to have been that it was not desirable to have more than one company doing business in the same territory. The farmers finally succeeded in getting into N. and they now have their own central there.

It is said, however, by the members of the company itself that non-members have received more benefit from this farmers' organization than the members. This seems to be the case because the big telephone company began extending its line wherever there was a call for it, as soon as the farmers' line was organized. The service of the big telephone company is also said to be much improved since that time. The service on the farmers' line, on the other hand, is entirely satisfactory also. The only regrettable thing about the farmers' telephone organization is that the neighborhoods are divided up, it being necessary even now for neighbors to send messengers from one place to another where they do not have the same telephone.

All the wool-growers of this township but one have membership in the Minnesota Wool-Growers' Association. This organization was the result of the unusually low prices of wool a few years ago. After the organization was formed, its members held their wool until they got a price for it that was generally satisfactory. One man stated that "the gain made by this combined holding more than paid for the shares of the company the first year." Last year the association built a fire and vermin-proof storehouse at a town in the southeastern part of the State. They will hereafter be in a position to keep their wool indefinitely with a minimum deterioration. Every member in this township spoke with pride of the achievement of this association, referring to it as "an example of what coöperation among farmers ought to and can accomplish."

According to the apparent success of all of these farmers' enterprises, it would seem that every farmer here would be "strong for coöperation." This is not the case, however, because there have been local attempts of farmers' stock companies which have not succeeded. Many farmers point to a venture made with a farmers' store some years ago. The business never flourished and, though "it did not fail," it was decided to sell out after a couple of years of poor support. This venture is commonly referred to as a proof that "farmers can't stick together to run a business." Another case is cited as an evidence that "farmers can't be trusted to run

a business," in spite of the success of the companies just referred to. This latest local example of failure was the farmers' elevator company at the station of S., off the northeast corner of the town. The causes of failure in this case were stated variously by the different members who had lost. It appears, however, that there was a laxness in business methods, no careful auditing of accounts or study of reports of the directors at the meeting of stockholders. Everybody seemed to think that the business was prospering as "patronage was good," but "all of a sudden we found out that we were in a hole." Proceedings in bankruptcy ended the enterprise. Many of those who "were stung" declared that they would "never again back any farmers' company with their hard-earned money."

In spite of an undercurrent of distrust as to their own ability to run a business venture successfully, conditions of the market soon caused many of the farmers to put behind them the chagrin from one failure, and undertake another organization whose purpose it was to force "fair and equitable treatment at the hands of a discriminating milk company." Accordingly the farmers around about D. have this last summer started a new creamery at the station D.

Although the starting of this new creamery was a surprise to the milk company, it was the result of years of "unfair treatment at the hands of this company that forced the farmer to take this step." It was said by the leaders of the farmers' movement that this milk company had in previous years worked up a big patronage by promoting a so-called stock company, according to the terms of which the farmer stockholders believed themselves to be shareholders in a joint local and city milk company. Once or twice a year the manager of the concern would come down from the cities and go about among the farmers explaining that he was installing the most complete outfit in the way of a modern milk-distributing plant, and that therefore it was impossible to pay any more for milk than he was paying. The farmers according to these reports began to count on their shares as being "worth anyway from a hundred and thirty to a hundred and fifty." Finally it became known, however, that they were shareholders only in the local auxiliary cooling plant at D., and that after all they had no share in the big city company, where all the improvements had been made. This naturally incensed those involved in the deal. It was not until this last summer, however, that they finally got together, and are now operating "one of the most up-to-date creameries in the State." To prevent any desertions and unjust expense for those supporting the creamery, they have provided that any member who sells his milk or cream elsewhere, must have his checks handled by the secretary of the association, so that there may be subtracted from them his share of the operating expenses of the creamery. They are agreed that it is necessary to do this, and that they

will thus keep up their equipment even if they all decide to deliver their milk to the milk companies. By keeping up their creamery they expect to get the same prices for their milk that farmers around N. and S. are getting, "even if we don't manufacture a bit of cheese or butter." Although the city milk company forthwith began to offer contracts to those who would withdraw from the farmers' pact before any shares were paid in, only two or three farmers withdrew from the deal.

The farmers about N. have been operating a creamery for a number of years and, although they are still in the business, their association has encountered much trouble. The creamery has had its patronage diminished by a centralizing plant of St. Paul, which receives shipments of milk and cream from all points in the State. Many of the biggest dairymen, although having shares in the farmers' creamery, are delivering their milk to the local cooling plant of the centralizing company at which it is put into the company's own cans to be taken up by the nine o'clock express to the cities, where it is sold out on the route of the company's city patrons the next day. It appears that the milk companies can pay more than the local creamery during the fall and winter months, and the difference in price amounts to as much as two hundred dollars on the whole output per year for some of the big Holstein breeders.

These milk companies do not publish a price in advance for their patrons, but pay at the end of the month as market conditions in the city warrant. They are careful lest they swamp the market with an over-supply. The excess is, therefore, separated locally. The cream is shipped to the central plant in the city, while the skimmed milk is either poured out or given away to farmers.

During the spring months, however, in spite of these precautions, the city market is forced down by the great shipments from other points over the country. During this time, the farmers' creamery pays a price for butter-fat which makes the creamery the better market. Some small farmers then return to their own creamery. The big dairymen do not, however. Some say they are ashamed to, but it seems that there is a more substantial reason for this, and that is, that the centralizer concern has contracts with these big dairymen which guarantees them certain minimum prices from month to month the year around. It is certain that they are not losing any money by staying with the centralizing company the year around. One of them when asked why he did not stay with his own creamery said: "That is not a matter of sentiment with me, it is a matter of business." He added that he would be out at least two hundred dollars a year if he should haul his milk to the farmers' creamery.

Thus we see that the farmers' creamery is in a peculiar position. In winter it would pay better to sell milk to the cities and in the summer it

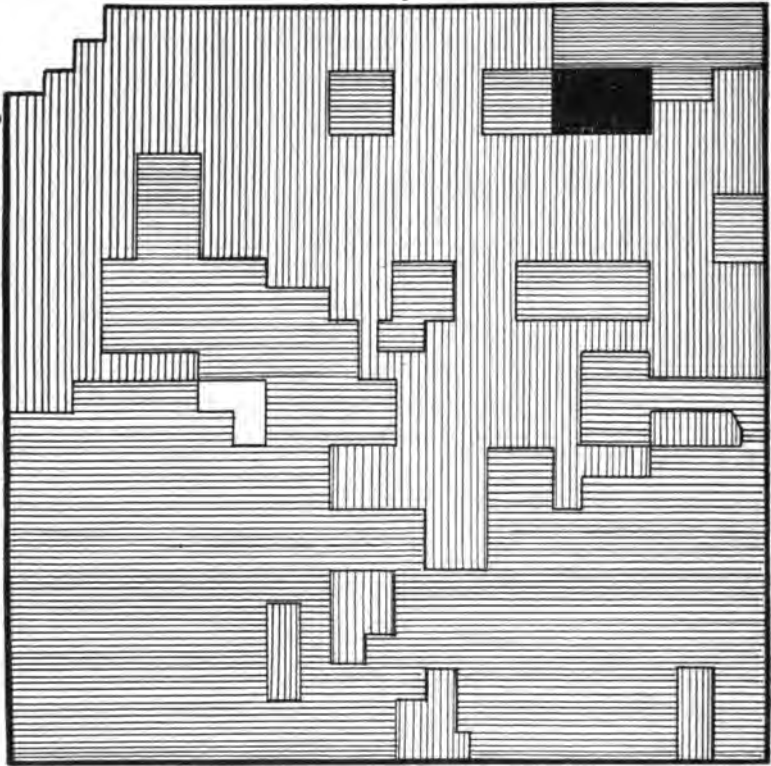
pays better to make cheese and butter. The management maintains that it is necessary to make cheese the year around in order to hold the cheese patronage and it is difficult to establish good connections for distributing milk in the cities, especially if only for the winter months.

Another reason why the farmers' association did not ship its milk instead of making cheese and butter is that the dairymen with different breeds of cattle could not agree upon a proper basis of figuring returns. Although the milk is sold per gallon or quart when retailed, the state law requires a minimum test of three and five-tenths per cent butter-fat. It was held that it would be an injustice to the farmer who had herds of Durhams, Jerseys, or Guernsey cattle, to be obliged to sell milk for the same price per quart as the Holstein people, inasmuch as the richer milk of the former was necessary to bring the whole up to grade. Although the Holstein people get much more milk per cow than the farmers of the other breeds, they would not consent to sell on the butter-fat test basis. It was thus that the milk companies got the big dairies to leave the farmers' creamery.

The shareholders in the creamery were pledged to patronize it, and to pay a certain percentage of each month's milk check into the treasury of the farmers' organization if they took their milk elsewhere. This was thought to be only fair to those who continued to patronize the farmers' creamery, for the general supplementary costs or over-head operating expenses are pretty much the same whether the volume of business done be big or small. If the few who "kept by" the creamery were to have these expenses taken from their milk alone, it would cut down net prices very materially. Furthermore it was not thought to be unfair to those who sold to the milk companies because they admitted that it was only because the farmers' creamery was doing business in town that they themselves were able to get such favorable prices for their milk. Only a few of the farmers paid in their quota of "expense money" after leaving the creamery and, therefore, their shares were forfeited to the association.

A glance at the map showing the area covered by the different breeds of cattle will throw light on this diversity of interests of the farmers of this township. About fifty-three per cent of the farmers have entered into the idea of community breeding. That is, fifty-three per cent of the farmers have used Holstein sires to such an extent that their herds have taken on the Holstein markings. Only a few of these have pure-bred herds. As a result of this idea the community around about the city of N., as already mentioned, has won "a world-wide fame." Farmers who got in line and coöperated with the original pushers of this movement have in the last few years been "reaping a golden harvest." As we have seen, however, almost fifty per cent of the farmers have not taken up with the idea even by this time. Their views used to be expressed as follows: "The whole

thing is a snare and a delusion." Many of them now admit that the thing has been "a big graft for those who got in on it at the start"; but they add, "this thing will soon have to stop, won't it?" They believe that the demand for these pure-bred Holstein cattle will soon be no stronger than it is for any other well-bred animal; and therefore, "wouldn't it be a waste of money to invest in such high-priced stock at this time?"



Map showing distribution of breeds of cattle.

There is also another explanation as to why a large number of the farmers keep the Shorthorns, the old dual-purpose breed. Those who live four miles or farther from town usually prefer to skim their milk and haul the cream down to town once or twice a week. There is thus a saving of time. When skimming their milk, they naturally have a dislike for "breeds whose milk is comparatively thin." So, for their purpose, especially if

they have pretty good corn land and a large farm, it is an economy of time and labor to produce beef and cream, with hogs as a by-product. This policy of time and labor conservation is, as can be seen, another reason for the limitation of the extent of community breeding.

On the Organization Map all membership in breeders' associations is indicated by the same character. Among the various live-stock associations the greatest membership is found in the Holstein Friesian Association and the Minnesota Dairymen's Association. Practically every man who is a member of the Holstein Friesian Association of America is also a member of the Minnesota Dairymen's Association. This shows that as full-blooded stock is being raised, the breeders begin to identify themselves with organizations promoting common interests.

What are we to conclude from the situation as it stands? The farmers have been coöperating successfully and yet they themselves do not have confidence in the movement. They feel that "farmers won't stick." It seems that with the advent of a more and more commercial type of farming there has grown up a modified code of business ethics. The older men lament that "there has been a breaking away from the old proud, rigorous honesty" that used to hold sway among the rural population. The old instincts of honesty are, of course, still there. Tell a farmer that he is "a cheat or a liar" and a blow will be his answer. In verbal agreements which he fully understands, he is still fully honest. But in the fulfillment of contracts of some complexity the exact meanings and implications of which are not understood, there are those who are not always honest. In simple agreements to exchange work with neighbors, or other cases of neighborhood coöperation, they all remain true to their obligations, but in business relations of a wide scope, they stoop to dishonesty. To illustrate, "we have those farmers who refuse to pay their share of the operating expenses of the creamery. Yet they were members of this farmers' creamery and had pledged to pay their share," but "the milk company held a dollar before their eyes and they couldn't see anything else."

Thus although all admitted that continued operation of the farmers' creamery was necessary to maintain the level of prices which they were receiving from the competing company, not one of them had analyzed the situation clearly enough to see that they were not "playing fair with their neighbors." To them it seemed "simply a matter of business." The old neighborly spirit of "I'll help you if you'll help me" was changed into "everybody dig for himself."

Then, too, "farmers are too distrustful of one another." When community breeding was first being agitated, the leaders of the movement immediately fell under the suspicion of many that they were only "trying to promote some scheme for their own benefit, trying to see how many fool

farmers they could rope in." Now that the scheme is "a big go" and "those who got in on it at the start are getting rich by it," the erstwhile suspicious ones on the outside try to defend their conduct by saying, "How are we to know whom to trust when people so many times show they can not be trusted?"

### CIVIC RELATIONS

It is said by those whose memory goes back to the beginnings of this township that the farmers of to-day no longer show the interest in the affairs of government that they did of old. "Political issues used to be discussed more and understood better by farmers years ago than they are to-day." Many still have vivid pictures in mind of the interesting campaign between Horace Greeley and General Grant. Even up to as recent a time as 1896 great popular interest was shown in the discussions of political rivals concerning issues on protective tariff or tariff for revenue only, and proposed monetary reforms. In those early days many town halls were built to be used not only as places for transacting township business, but also as places where a crowd might gather evenings to hear an exposition of the planks of the rival political platforms. Sometimes joint debates between non-office-seeking men would be held before a packed house of farmers who in some cases had quit threshing an hour or two earlier in the evening in order to be on hand.

To-day many farmers wonder "what town-halls ever were built for any way." "Why couldn't all townships have their town meetings and elections in some school building the way they do it in many places?" It is true that for most occasions the schools are "large enough for the turn-outs we have at elections, or town meetings, too." Although the township has about one hundred and sixty eligible voters on the poll lists, "generally only about fifty men show up for town meetings." Less than that number come out for the primary elections. The general elections bring out a hundred voters, less than two-thirds of the total. "The more Americanized we are getting to be, the poorer citizens we become." "A farmer of to-day won't even read or talk about politics, to say nothing of going to political meetings." What is the cause of it? The answers of the farmers themselves are various. We will consider some of the reasons given and thus perhaps may glean some of the important causes for this decline of interest in political affairs.

The early settlers of the county saw the functions of a government and the needs for it in a peculiar way, such as men of to-day are not likely to do. When they came to the community where they wished to establish their home, they at once realized the need of protection against those who

might wrong them or do them injury. In order to get to and from markets, and from place to place, the need for roads became felt. Everybody readily saw how necessary it was for the members of the community to band together into a civic unit in order to acquire for themselves the things they could not secure individually. After thus being forced to organize themselves into a civil township, and to establish a relationship with the county and the state government, it was only natural that these early men, many of whom were of foreign birth, should comprehend the exact nature of the government, and should clearly understand their own individual relation to it.

The citizen of to-day, on the other hand, "is born to it" and takes it all as a matter of course. The functions of government are not comprehended. About the only relation to the government that many feel is that they must pay taxes for its support. There was general complaint against the great increase of taxes. Some remembered the time when thirty-three hundred dollars was the total tax of the farmers of this township. "To-day we have three times that amount." Indeed, the total tax of the township in 1910 was eleven thousand, one hundred and seventy-three dollars and seventy-five cents. Although this increase was caused almost entirely by local taxation, notable increases being made in the Town Road and Bridge Fund, the local District School Tax, and County Jail Fund, many different explanations were given by various farmers. Some felt that it was due to arbitrary "raises of salary by officials," all of whom "now also want assistants, although the business used to be done without them." There were others who "had no idea of where the money went to," but who charged that "the raise was made arbitrarily by the government, ever since they've been going around getting the census." "That's where they've caught the fool farmers by making them believe that thing had nothing to do with taxes." Thus, while a farmer knows that taxes have been greatly increased, he often does not know why; and, while he complains that "sixty dollars taxes is too much for a poor farmer with only eighty acres of land," he does not see the services rendered him by the government for this amount. "He does not think of the fact that those sixty dollars are but paying his share for the schooling of five of his children for eight months of the year, the building of permanent roads and bridges; the care of unfortunate, poor, and defectives in the various institutions and asylums throughout the State; as well as the protection of his home and property against evil doers." Somehow, they do not connect themselves up with all this government activity. They know that at town meetings money is voted for bridges and township expenses, but many feel that "that is done only because the government makes them do it." "They are born Americans, brought up in American schools and have lived here all their



lives, yet they smile scornfully when the idea is suggested that they are a part of the sovereignty of the State." "Yes, I know," said one, "that we are the government when it comes to paying for it all, but you don't want to stand there and tell me that any one is going to pay any attention to what we farmers want."

One farmer, upon being drawn into conversation on things pertaining to government, expressed himself as "ignorant of politics," and "proud of it"; "for that is no business for an honest man." "I'll tell you, though," he added, "if the government ever wants you for anything, then it is time to pay attention and do what you are asked." It appeared that he had once been fined ten dollars for being a day late in responding to the summons to serve on the jury. This experience that he had with the court had impressed him with the importance of government, but he considered it "a waste of time for a farmer to pay any attention to politics." Naturally enough men who know so little about governmental affairs can not be expected to take much interest in political matters, especially when they consider politics as something apart from government. They may be vitally interested in getting Bill Simpkins in as sheriff, "for he is a good fellow," and "always done what was white by everybody." They "would like to pick out all the men on the ballot just as they pick out for their town supervisors the men whose honesty and judgment they have the most faith in." Thus, where principles are little understood and where candidates on the state and national tickets are not known personally, the choice is often based upon mere prejudice or upon some impression which they have chanced to form concerning the character of the man.

The foregoing is not a description of the typical farmer in his civic relations. It represents a class, however, of which there are still a big number. While a majority of farmers may understand in a general way the organization and the relationship of town, county, state, and federal government, there are a great number who do not. Whatever comprehension of these matters the majority may have, the feeling was general that "politics are corrupt," and many asked "what is the use of farmers taking off time for politics when the whole thing is run by political bosses anyway?" Some well-informed men thought that the decline of interest in political discussions among many was largely due to the spread of daily newspapers among the farmers. "Instead of reading facts as they were summarized by the weekly paper, and deliberate editorial discussions on these matters, they now merely give a hurried glance at headlines, at dinner-time each day, and thus get nothing but the sensational features of charges of political debauchery and corruption." Furthermore, "many farmers have seen themselves held up to ridicule by cartoons and other caricatures representing the "chin-whiskered Reuben Barleycorn sitting

open-mouthed before a spell-binding political orator." "The fact is," they say, "that since the introduction of the rural mail service we find but few farmers at political meetings." "The things that he sees in the headlines of daily papers together with cartoons that ridicule the farmer who tries to inform himself as of old, have combined to make the farmer of to-day turn from political discussions in general." Certain it is that only a few farmers read much else besides headlines, and, according to the testimony of every farmer approached on the subject, editorials are but seldom read, and "political assemblies attended—never." "You can't even talk politics at a farmers' gathering but that you will be made sport of. They don't see how politics has anything to do with farming, or why farmers should take any interest in it."

The better-informed farmers of the community who talked about and lamented this general attitude towards political matters were not without ideas when asked for a remedy for the situation. A general opinion was that "schools run by the government certainly should do more to acquaint the growing generations with practical knowledge about government." The younger generation of farmers ought to know more about affairs of government than the old, but they don't learn anything about such things in our country schools now." "We need young men who will understand the organization of society in government, and who clearly see the relation between the local township and the county organization, and the connections between the county, state, and federal governments. Then farmers will get to see how vitally their own welfare connects up with governmental activities."

There were also those who felt that the local newspapers weren't doing what they should for their constituency. "Let them come out on the front page with issues in which the welfare of farmers as a class is vitally concerned, the way papers that represent other interests do it. See how the laboring men's publications bring out in big head-lines the issues which confront them in their fight against other interests. Why can't our local editors do as much for us? Most farmers never clearly see the real issues in state or national politics as they concern the farmer. To give but a little explanation in some out-of-the-way part of the paper won't do." "Very few farmers really understand constitutional amendments submitted at general elections, so they fail to vote on them and thus much legislation that farmers really are in favor of is lost." The local paper is the one that could best render this service, as is shown by the fact that local papers are kept and read in more homes than any other class of papers. Although farm journals are kept in eighty-four per cent of all the homes, only forty-seven per cent of the farmers read them. The local papers are always eagerly read and are, therefore, in the best position to render this service.

## ROADS

A study of the road map will present in outline form the present condition of the public highways of this township. Out of approximately seventy-two miles of road, there are about twelve miles of gravelled road-bed. About sixty miles of these roads belong to this township as far as road-work is concerned. The farmers have gravelled approximately nine miles of road-bed here and there as indicated by dots on the map. A stretch of road leading out of N. going south two miles, then turning east for one mile, has been graded and gravelled under the direction of the State Highway Commission. Thus there is a total of about twelve miles of gravelled road-bed. This is about twenty per cent of the travelled highway. According to the State Highway Commission this "is above the average." Their road census shows that on the average approximately ten per cent of the highways have been improved with gravel or macadam.

The roads not gravelled have been mapped as "Fair Dirt Grade" and as "Bad Road-Bed." As will be seen, about thirty per cent of the total highway comes under the last classification. The objection may be made by those who are acquainted with roads in this township that some of this highway has never been travelled, is used very little at present and, therefore, deserves but little attention. There is validity in this objection for one or two short stretches, but most of the highway designated as "Bad Road" is not travelled simply because it is practically impossible to travel it. It will be noted that most of the bad road is found along the southern border of the township. This is due largely to the fact that these roads are just on the dividing line between the traffic that goes south and that which goes north. But here, too, it would seem that these roads would be used very much more if they were passable for a team with "a load of any size." This territory is very hilly. Although some of the steepest hills have been skirted, many bad inclines remain and make this road hard to keep in shape.

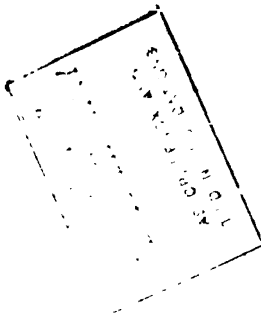
There are about forty-two miles of road that come under the heading of "Fair Dirt Grade." This constitutes the typical country, where the road-bed has been worked and drained well enough to be passable the year around. As every one knows who has travelled country roads much, their condition varies according to the season of the year. In midsummer or harvest time, after a season of dry weather, they become smooth and are generally covered with loose dust, the depth of which depends upon traffic. In the spring or fall, however, during and for a while after a rainy season, these roads are "in a bad shape." No heavy loads can be hauled at such times. Yet they are never so bad but that farmers can haul their milk or cream to town. The low soft spots are pretty well filled up with



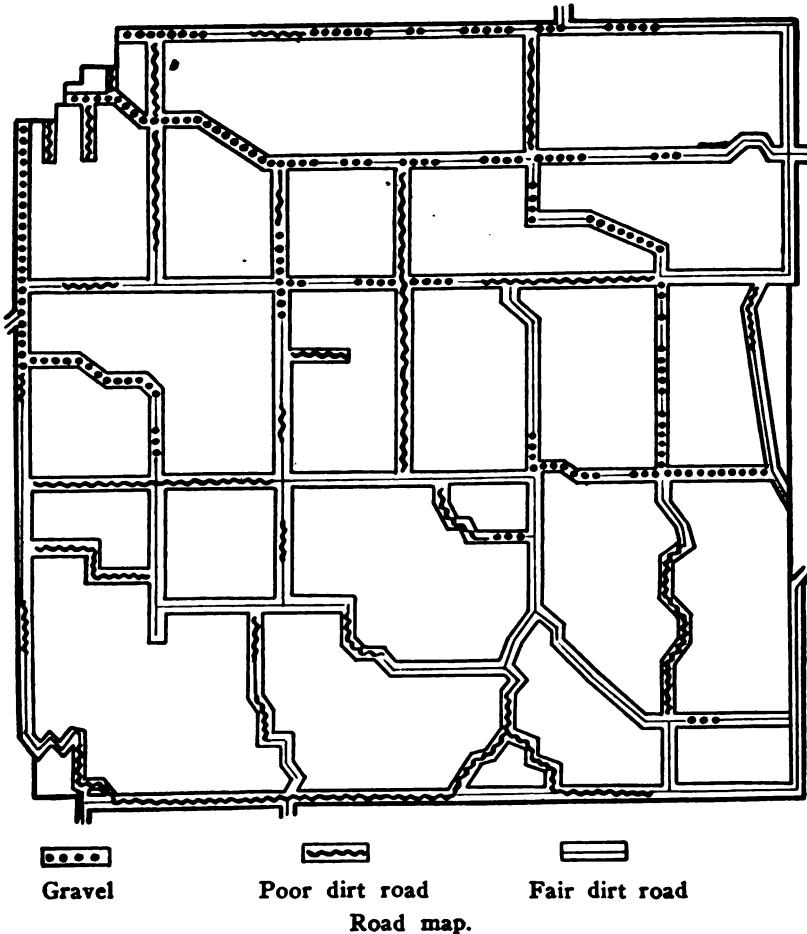
A Town Line Road. "The Hills Demand All the Work."



State Road, Easy Grades, Always in Shape for Big Loads.



rock or gravel, so that the main highways are always passable, even if traffic is slowed up considerably by the muddy and slippery condition of the roads. For a week or so after the "wet spells" these roads are rough and often cut up with deep ruts. This condition gradually gives way to smoothness and dust as the roads are travelled with broad-tired wagons and the daily milk rigs.



We have seen what the condition of the roads in this township is, and at the same time attention has been called to the fact that, though for total road improvement this township ranks higher than the average, nevertheless there remain stretches of poor dirt road which tend to make the marketing seasonal. In the previous chapter it was pointed out that at times it would cost more than two and one-half times as much to market the farm products as it costs when the roads are dry and in good shape. It

is important to know by what system and methods these roads have been constructed and are now being maintained.

This township has always worked its roads under the old system. As is well known to rural people this system provides for a yearly levy of road tax by the town board, this tax to be "worked off" by the farmer against whom it is levied. Though the state law does not specify the limits of the rate of this tax, it appears to be customary to levy a tax of twenty-five cents on every hundred dollars of the assessed valuation of taxable property; hence a two and one-half mill rate. This local levy, as already stated, is worked out by the farmers themselves. Since it furnishes by far the most important part of the local road work, let us see how efficiently the work is done.

The township is divided into districts, each having from three to six miles of road to look after. The division into districts is done by the supervisors and, in making these divisions, much local politics is often played. The supervisors are, of course, appealed to from many different parties as to how the districts are to be laid out. No matter how conscientious they may be, great inequalities in tasks may be allotted to the different districts. We have already seen how the roads of the southern part of this township are in very bad condition. This is largely due to the insufficiency of the tax levy and yet the people of this district were taxed at the same rate as those of the districts farther north. Their land is of less value, in among the hills, and their roads require the most work.

The people of the good-road districts argue that the people out south "never put in an honest day's work in all the fifty years that they've been at it. They've been loafing around, lying in the shade of the trees by the roadside, while we people were busy grading and gravelling." While it no doubt is true that there are districts where the farmers "do not do an honest day's work when they're putting in time on the road," this practice is by no means limited to the southern districts. They haven't gravelled because no gravel pits are near. Their roads are so bad in many places that "they've simply got to get out and dig to keep the roads at all passable."

One of these districts, having three miles of this hilly road to work, had a total of only about thirty-five dollars to be put into road work. They worked hard and faithfully and yet the best they could do this year was to fix about fifteen rods of road on one of the worst hills. There were three hills in the district, almost impassable after a rain. In another adjoining district the pathmaster complained that he had "fixed up one hill as far as our district extended, but the upper stretch on the long hill belonged to another boss; he wouldn't fix up his end, so after the first big rain, all of our district's work was washed away. That is the way we

have been tearing around for fifty years, and still we haven't got any roads."

Another objection made to this system is that the overseer, although he is boss, doesn't feel that he can afford to do anything that may antagonize a neighbor. When he gets his corn plowed and work in shape, ready for road work, his neighbors may have a very important job on their hands, and, if he uses his power and forces them to leave their work to "do the roads," enmity is apt to arise. People all through the country will cite cases of where a "road boss sent in his books as paid when two or three farmers hadn't done a lick of work on the roads." He can't afford to have his neighbors as enemies and so he lets them off, after they've promised to put in their work when they get time.

Even where there isn't this sort of friction, the equipment that the ordinary farmer crew has is a poor one and entirely inadequate. They usually come on with "the poorest old rack of a team a farmer has, and an old rusty plow which it takes a half a day to get to scour. Some may bring an old pickax with a cracked handle, and when this breaks, a half day is spent in going back to get another tool." Thus "the time is pattered away." This township owns one big road grader, requiring eight horse-power to run it, two smaller graders, requiring four horse-power, four wheel scrapers, and several smaller scrapers. That, at least, was the inventory given by two supervisors although nobody seemed sure of just what their equipment consisted.

The big grader is used but little, although it is admitted that twice as much work can thus be done. The reason seems to be that no one is quite sure just where it is, and if he does know, "usually there are bolts gone, and some repairs to be made." Rather than "fool away bothering with it," they go at plowing up a stretch of road, and scraping out little ditches along the roadsides, here and there, where things look the worst. This is kept up until time has been worked off. With the coming of the summer freshets much of the loose dirt ridge is washed back into the ditches again, the road-bed proper remaining a well-nigh impassable mire for days afterward.

The efficiency of the present system of working roads is indicated by figures from the county auditor's office. The farming territory is given distinct from the village in 1881 for the first time. Computed at two and one-half mills, the local road-tax rate from the total assessed valuation of the rural township, we get a total of forty-five thousand dollars spent on the township roads since 1871. Thus there has been spent over one thousand dollars per year on these roads, an amount equal approximately to what it has cost to build a mile of "gentle-grade, well-drained, always dry" gravelled State Road. The above-mentioned sum of forty-five thousand dollars does not represent the total expenditure of labor on the roads of

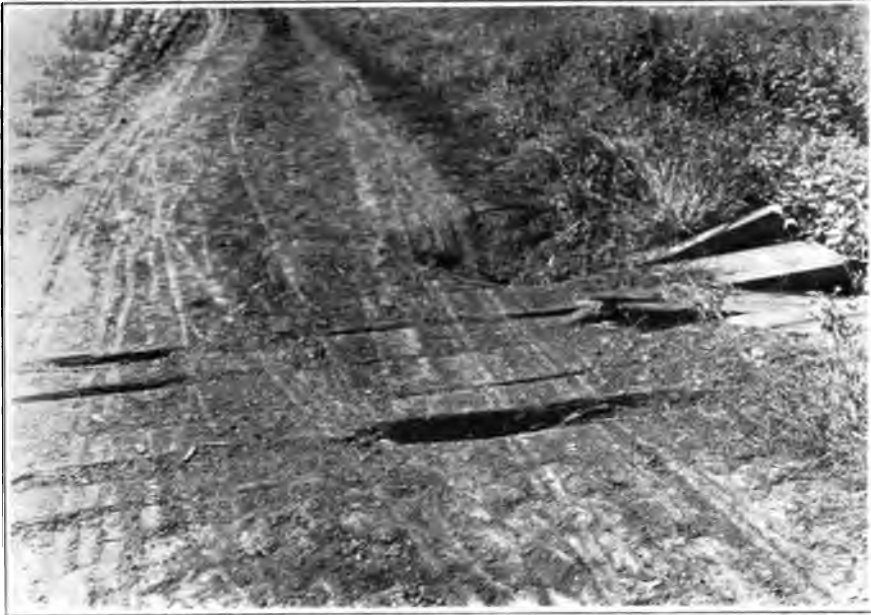


this township. There are twelve years from the time the township first was organized until 1870 for which we have no figures. Since the amount for 1871 was six hundred and eleven dollars, it seems safe to assume that at least an additional six thousand dollars' worth of service was done on the roads during that time, especially in view of the fact that in early days gratuitous road work was often done in order to get a passable road to the market.

The figures just cited represent only the amount of tax that has been "worked off" by the farmers themselves. In addition to this the township has been making an annual levy of taxes that must be paid in cash to make up the Town Road and Bridge Fund. The amount of money that has thus been raised amounts to fifteen thousand dollars. "Practically all of this amount has been expended upon the construction of culverts and bridges and bridge approaches." In recent years there has been evinced an increased interest in the construction of permanent culverts and bridges. Whereas the Road and Bridge Fund in 1896 was about four hundred dollars, in 1910 it had increased to one thousand six hundred dollars. Although a little of this has been spent on the cost of gravel at about ten or twenty cents per yard, the great increase of expenditure has consisted almost entirely in the construction of stone and concrete culverts, and steel bridges. For bridges costing over one-eighth of one per cent of the taxable valuation of the township, one-half of the costs are paid out of the County Road and Bridge Fund. Two such bridges have been built in this township.

How much work on roads has been wasted can not, of course, be shown. It might be said that fifty miles of permanent roads could have been built with the fifty-one thousand dollars' worth of road-labor mentioned above. Each year a large amount of work would necessarily have to be done throughout the whole township to maintain the roads in a passable condition. That there has been a waste of community effort is evident, however, and it is generally admitted by the farmers themselves.

If it is an admitted fact that the present system of working roads is inadequate and wasteful, why is there not a change in the system? In the first place it may be said, that most farmers do not attach as great importance to the value of good roads as city people think they ought. It is admitted that the strain on horses is greater on slippery, muddy roads than on dry ones. The milk must be hauled daily regardless of road conditions, but "the loss in horse flesh" can not easily be figured in dollars and cents. Again, though the cost of marketing grain over good dry roads would be much less than it costs with poorer hauling conditions, only a very few farmers figure any loss due to this account. By marketing their grain in the winter, "a bit by bit," "when time isn't worth much of anything and when we've got to go to town once in a while anyway," there seems to



Concrete Culverts are Replacing These.



The First Cost is High, but It is Wise Economy.

NEW YORK  
APR 19 1946  
T. D. W. PUBLICATIONS

NEW YORK  
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NEW YORK  
APR 19 1946

be no loss to them. As to the social value of roads to a farming community, no one seems to have given it any consideration.

There is agitation for road improvement among the farmers, however, as indicated by the increase of levy for Road and Bridge Fund. Although most of them concede that under the present system "we can never expect to have the roads what they ought to be," there is division among them when it comes to voting for a change. Only twenty-eight per cent of them were out and out for a change to a system of central control by "a County Road Engineer whose business it would be to work out plans and specifications of roads and grades, bridges and all, the actual construction to be left to contractors with their own labor and outfits." Besides these there were fifty-four per cent of the farmers who admitted that by such a system "the roads could be greatly improved and at less cost than we are working them by the old method." This total of eighty-one per cent of all the farmers also seemed to agree that it is of importance to the farmers themselves to have better roads, and that the farmers of to-day ought not to be made to take off time working roads when most of them can not well spare this time from their necessary farm work. The remaining nineteen per cent of the farmers, however, are strongly opposed to any system involving a centralized control over road work, arguing that only the main roads between the towns scattered through the county would be improved under such a system. "No doubt such a system would be just the thing for the automobilists of the city, who would in that way get dustless, concrete, paved highways, but how is a farmer to draw loads on those roads when they are covered with ice? And what would become of the roads of out-of-the-way districts, such as we have among the southern hills of this township? It would be a distant time when those poor farmers would have any money spent on their roads." Arguments of this sort keep the fifty-four per cent of the farmers voting against a change, and it thus seems unlikely that the farmers themselves are apt to make a change in the system of road-building.

## EDUCATION

The aids to education among farmers may be shown by such factors as communication with the outside world, lectures and institutes attended, and the periodicals or magazines read, quite as much as by the interest manifest in the support of schools.

The rural mail service has greatly increased the amount of reading matter kept by farmers. In this township fifty-eight per cent of the farmers kept a daily paper. The influence of these city publications has not only widened the mental horizon of the rural people, but also, as shown

in previous chapters, given the farmer a world-outlook on markets and changed his attitude towards politics. The number of homes reached by popular magazines, such as McClure's, Cosmopolitan, World's Work, Everybody's, Ladies' Home Journal, Youth's Companion, etc., is far less. In only twenty-seven per cent of the homes of this township were any of the above class of periodicals read. Of the cheaper class of magazines, such as the Woman's World and Good Stories, thirty-two per cent of the homes were readers. Eight homes contained a collection of books sufficient to be designated "a library." Five families had drawn books from the Carnegie Library at N. The subject-matter of the books found in the homes varied from present-day novels, found in nearly all homes with

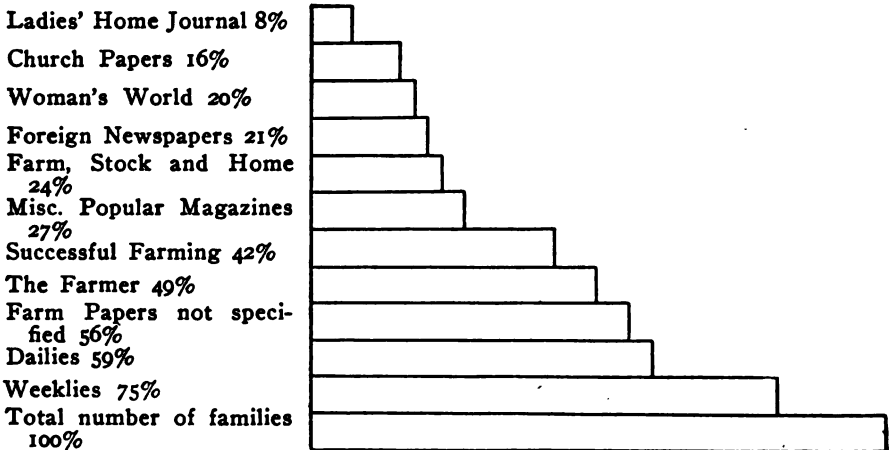


Diagram showing percentage of farmers reached by various kinds of reading material.

young women, to complete sets of the works of the best authors in homes with libraries. There were also historical, philosophical, and scientific works among these collections. The librarian at N. stated that the limited number of rural people who did draw books read "usually the very heaviest and best kind of works." It is mainly the women who read anything outside of the daily papers or the farmers' publications.

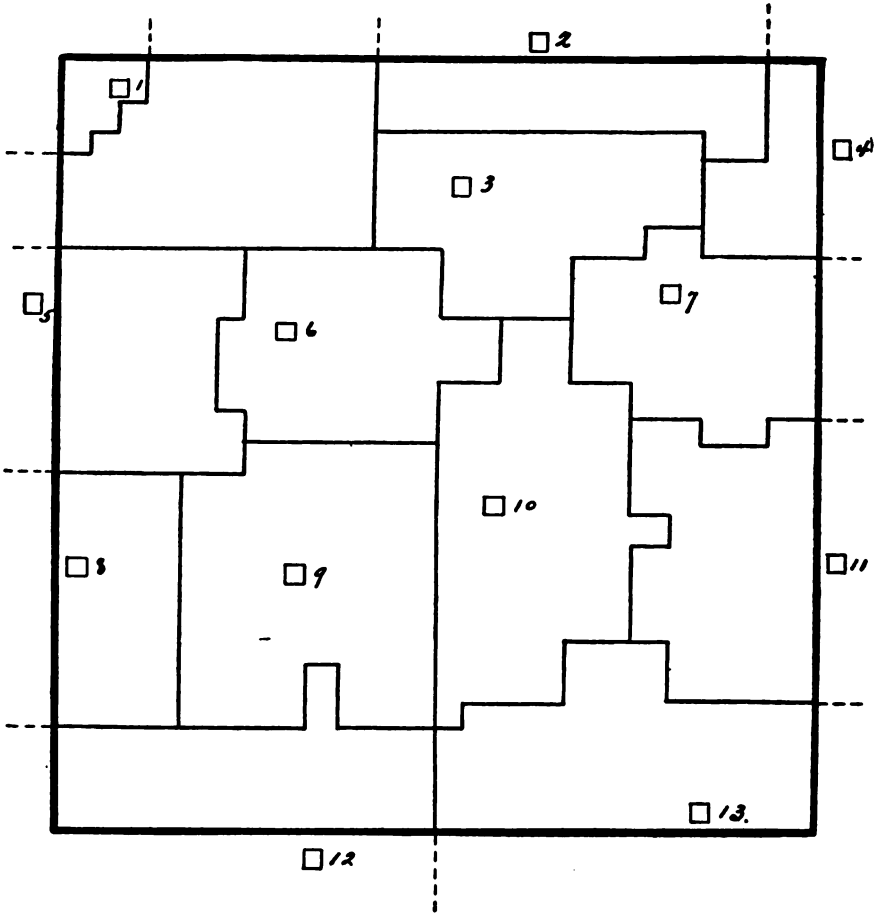
As already stated, although farm journals are kept by eighty-four per cent of the farmers, only about fifty per cent of them read these papers. It should not be inferred from this, however, that in half of the homes where farm papers are kept no one reads them. In thirteen per cent of the places where farm papers are kept "the lady of the house" reads them. Where this is the case, she usually knows how to suggest certain schemes she may have gotten from her reading without letting her husband know

where the idea came from, and thus prevent his becoming prejudiced against it. There is a pretty general sentiment against so-called "scientific farming schemes," promulgated by station bulletins and farm papers. Only forty-three per cent of the farmers expressed any confidence in scientific farming methods. That accounts in a large measure for the small number of farmers that read farming literature. There are farmers, however, who don't read "that stuff" mainly because reading is difficult and tiresome for them. In these cases it sometimes happens that boys do read the paper and are not prevented from acting upon some suggestions thus received.

Only fourteen per cent of the farmers ever attended farmers' institutes. Most of those who stayed away gave as their reason, that they had been brought up on a farm and were of the opinion that they "knew as much about their own business as an outsider at least." "Those institute men talk so much absurd stuff that no man, who knows farming at all, can believe. They couldn't possibly have practiced the kind of farming they preach unless they made their money by some graft, such as lecturing at institutes."

This is not, however, the attitude of the younger generation, who feel that "a little brains applied here and there often saves much elbow grease." Their attitude toward farmers' short courses and institutes is in the main favorable. They say that "the present-day institute talkers are usually much better men than they used to be and that it is well worth a man's time to take in a discussion of farming topics by a man who knows what he is talking about."

The educational situation of the township from the standpoint of support given to public schools can best be shown by referring to figures on the School District Map. Comparing this map with the Nationality Map in the introductory chapter a considerable difference is shown between the various nationalities as regards their support of the public schools. Thus, by comparing the rate of special school tax for the various districts it appears that, while one mixed nationality district is taxing itself for the support of its school, up to the legal limit of fifteen mills, one Scandinavian district is levying a special school tax at the rate of one and one-tenth mills. The main cause for the low rate in the two Scandinavian districts is due to the short school term they have there. They are, however, paying more per day than any other district. It can not, therefore, be said that a low rate of taxation shows a low rate of interest in education. These Norwegians are supporting four or five months of parochial school in addition to the public school. Another cause for the varying tax rates aside from the grade of teacher employed, the equipment of the school, and the short term of school already mentioned, is the unequal valuation of the



Map of school districts of the township.

District Number	Assessed Valuation	School Tax Rate Mills	Enrollment	School term months	Cost per day	Cost per day per pupil
1	\$16,863	9.0	..	9	....	....
2	48,291	3.7	17	8	\$2.20	\$0.13
3	35,471	13.3	6	8	3.29	.55
4	10,476	4.0	15	8	....	....
5	37,976	4.6	22	9	3.83	.18
6	36,355	6.9	12	8	2.21	.18
7	48,198	3.9	7	8	....	....
8	27,687	8.7	17	8	2.73	.16
9	45,189	5.3	11	8	2.45	.24
10	49,984	4.0	17	8	2.08	.12
11	34,238	15.0	..	9	....	....
12	26,875	1.1	29	5	3.25	.11
13	25,386	2.2	27	6	2.77	.10

various districts. It is impossible to divide up the territory in such a way as to give each district an equal taxable valuation.

Other comparisons between various districts can be made. Thus from the figures on the map it appears that, while one district is spending but twelve cents per pupil per day, another district is spending fifty-five cents. This is to be explained mainly by the fact that the enrollment of the former is three times that of the latter. Many point to this inequality in expenditures as one of the strong arguments for the consolidation of small districts. One of the big objections made against consolidation, on the other hand, is that the distance for pupils to go would be too great. Under the present system the distance varies from ten rods to three miles. The average distance to school for the pupils of this township is one and one-seventh miles. In most cases the children walk to and from school, except in stormy or unusually cold weather. At such times most farmers haul their children to school in the morning and back again at night. In many cases pupils can catch rides with milk rigs going their way. Thus it is that in some cases pupils will attend a school outside of their own district, just because they may ride most of the way by so doing. The school board usually makes no objection to these outsiders as long as their school is not crowded. In the latter event they may refuse admittance, but usually agree to accept the pupils if the board of the school from which the pupils come agree to allow for tuition.

A great difference between various schools also appears when comparing districts as to the amount of money spent for each day of school kept. Thus one district gives nine months of school, paying three dollars and eighty-three cents per day for their school, while another district with only eight months of school is paying but two dollars and eight cents per day. The school buildings vary from a small frame building sixteen by twenty-two to a four-room brick school building at D. The latter school is supported by consolidated districts and only a portion of the combined territory is found in this township.

The equipment of these schools is usually limited to a soft-coal stove in one corner of the room, a bit of blackboard, and a chart. Some have a set of maps and a globe. Most of them still have double seats. Only two of the country schools were well enough equipped to get first-class state aid. Only three districts employed a first grade teacher. The wages paid varied from thirty to fifty dollars per month. This pays for janitor services as well as for teaching. The floors are scrubbed usually once a year. The job is let out by contract at school meetings. Pay for this ranges from five to ten dollars. A half day's work by two persons usually completes the job. Some teachers will scrub the floors themselves during the term, but no extra compensation is granted for this.



The enrollment of the various schools is given on the District Map. The records for average attendance sent in to the county superintendent's office were not all made out properly and hence can not be given. The enrollment at these schools is composed of pupils in all of the eight grades. The average ages of the pupils of various grades were as follows: first grade, seven years; second grade, eight years; third grade, nine years; fourth grade, ten years; fifth grade, eleven years; sixth grade, twelve years; seventh grade, thirteen years; and eighth grade, fourteen years. No records are at hand as to what per cent of pupils ever finish the eighth grade. One school turned out its first eighth grade graduate last year.

The farmers who belong to the district including the city of N. send their boys and girls to "one of the best schools in the State." The high-school building is a splendid structure which was built a year ago. The farmers of the district all voted against the new building, however, on account of "too high taxes." None of the county school districts of this township had associated with the N. school in order to avail themselves of the advantages of the newly introduced subjects of Manual Training, Domestic Science, and Agriculture, although there are thirteen girls and seven boys from the farms of this township who are attending the high school and availing themselves of these courses.

The condition of country schools compared with town or city schools is admittedly poor, although there has been a general increase of interest and financial support. The records of the county auditor's books show that the special school tax for this township has increased from seven hundred and fifty-seven dollars in 1871 to three thousand and eighty-nine dollars in 1911. Thus it is seen that the amount raised annually for school purposes has nearly quadrupled in forty years. Whatever others may think of the school situation as it presents itself, the farmers themselves are generally dissatisfied with the results. One man estimated that "at least seventy-five thousand dollars must have been spent locally for the support of schools since the township was first organized." Although exact figures are not at hand, the records in the county auditor's office would seem to indicate that the estimate is approximately correct. "What have we to show for it?" was the query. "True, illiteracy has been practically driven from our township, but what practical results have we for all this money?" "To what extent have they developed better citizens; isn't it true that the younger generation know less about government affairs than the old-timers?"

Especially strong was the arraignment made by the older generation of church-going people, foremost among whom were certain Norwegians, who charged that the public schools were "aiding the decline of morality that is everywhere becoming so manifest." It wasn't the country school so much, however, as the town high schools that were arraigned for im-



Teachers Usually Don't Care Much for a Country School.



A Well-supported Country School.

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moral influences. "It's hard enough to keep the boys and girls straight when you have them right under your eyes, and at home every evening, say nothing about sending them away to town where they can go and do almost anything that they want to." "Religion has been taken out of the schools, and what has been put in its place? Social doings; parties and dances."

This attitude not only explains why many parents keep their boys and girls from going to high school, but also why the Scandinavians have such short terms of public school. They want to keep their children "under the influence of good religious training as long as it is possible to do so." "Ignorant foreigners, no doubt, are a menace to our country, but worse than the ignorant hordes in the cities, are the educated scoundrels turned out by our high schools and universities; and yet they blame us Scandinavians when we try to give our children that which is needed more than anything else: a religious conscience."

A general criticism that is met with is that the school curriculum is loaded down with "too many subjects, which may be interesting and good enough for those who can go to school until they are through high school and college, but which are of little use to the boy who has to quit school as soon as he is sixteen to get to work." "What good is a lot of the grammar they get going to do them; or what use is a farmer to make of such stuff as learning to 'bound British South Africa,' or to give the height of Mt. Kiliamanjaro? Why not teach something that a farmer can make use of?"

Furthermore it is charged that the schools are responsible for the outflow of youths from the country to the city. An old farmer who evidently had thought much on the subject said, "The things they take up in school all tend to direct the thought towards what man has done and is doing in cities. The boy who reads much at all begins to think that the only place where brains can be applied is in the city. Instead of leading the youth to think about the natural sciences as they connect up with the hills, the woods, and all the well-known life about them, the schools direct the new-born power of thought and reason into the realms of man-made conditions, which always gravitate towards the city. It is only natural that the boys and girls who are studious and thoughtful should begin to busy their minds with schemes of how they may get into that life where all big things seem to be accomplished. Small wonder that the brightest of our boys want to be lawyers, doctors, or engineers; and if they can't go to college, they leave the farm anyway to try to work their way up in business, like Marshall Field or Jim Hill."

The suggestion has, of course, been made to these various farmers who are finding fault with the schools, that consolidation of the various small districts might permit them to have better schools. It appears that twenty-

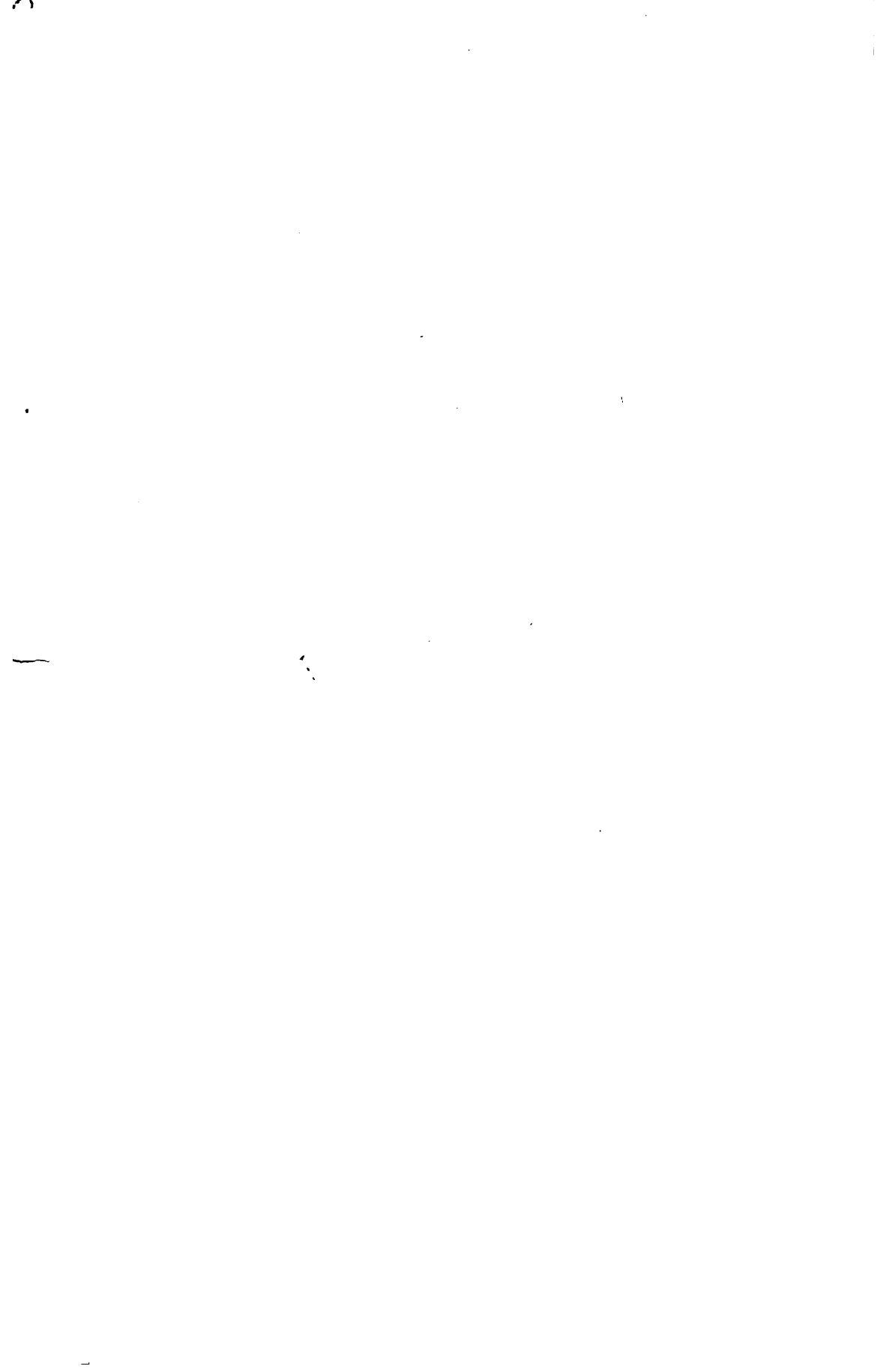
six per cent of the farmers of this township were in favor of consolidation, arguing that only in that way could enough money be gotten together to build a schoolhouse of the kind in which the best teachers would be willing to stay and teach in the country. They pointed out that the way it is now "no teacher who makes good will care to walk through the snow every morning in winter to start her own fires, when she can get just as much or more money teaching in a city school with no janitor work attached to the job." "No one wants to keep a teacher and she often has to board over a mile from school." Another thing that most teachers miss in the country is the social life which is dull and unattractive to most of them. There are no entertainments, lectures, books, and magazines that they may desire. "But how are we going to remedy all these things unless we get together and put up a school where a janitor may be kept, and where lectures and entertainments may be given for the benefit of the whole community?"

The majority of farmers are, however, opposed to consolidation. Besides the objection of "too long distances for children to be hauled in cold weather," it is argued that "in the district around D., where consolidation is being tried, the only noticeable difference is that their school taxes are much higher than our own. They may be having better teachers and their pupils may parse a pronoun better than ours, but what real good are they getting out of it? They may be getting more boys and girls through the common grades, and these will then be ready for high school, but what good will the farmers get of that? We've seen good boys and girls leave the common grades, and go to some high school, and after two years they were so changed that even their parents didn't know them! That may be a triumph of education, but do you expect us to pay for that sort of thing?"

Some of these who are so strongly opposed to consolidation, felt that the things to be desired by the farmer, viz., "the building up of an interest in rural life among the youth who are now leaving the country where they are needed, for the city where there are already too many of them, can best be gotten at by organizing farmers' clubs at each schoolhouse in the country." Here the farmers could "gather every week in the slack season to conduct programs including papers on sociological facts, giving figures that show averages, and thus prove to the visionary day-dreaming youth how much better is the average lot of those who remain in the country than that of those who have gone to the city." "Put the facts before them. To stir up an interest in the life that to them is so dull and monotonous, papers could be presented connecting up the world of science as related to farming. Debates could be pulled off as to what breed of cattle the community ought to go into. That would certainly be interesting to all, and the community would be greatly benefitted by it. Even social gatherings could be worked in with this plan. Each school district



High School where Agricultural Sciences Are Taught.

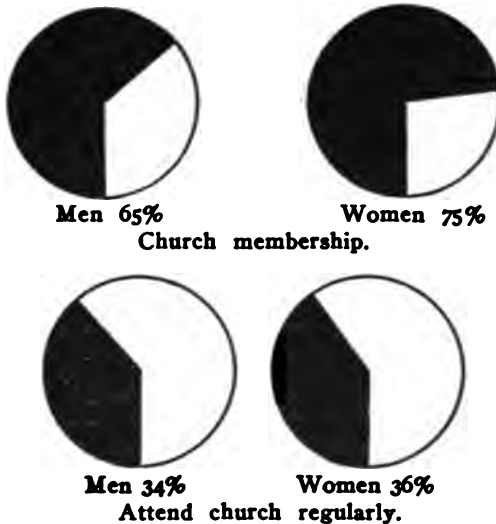


could have one of these clubs. They might be organized by some county superintendent whose business it would be to push this sort of thing."

Those who favored the above scheme held that to improve the school situation it was necessary to develop a community pride such as would come through club organizations; that as a result of the social activity thus brought about, better teachers could be kept in the country. To the majority of farmers school consolidation in itself seemed of minor importance.

### RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

The Organization Map found in the chapter on farmers' organizations also designates the homes in which church membership is found. In these homes, seventy-five per cent of the women and sixty-five per cent of the men are church members. The average of memberships by families is sixty-nine per cent. The average for the State as given by the last United



States Census Report is forty-one per cent. This does not mean, however, that those who are non-church members never attend church, for some of them attend quite as much as do many of the church members, however little that may be. Only thirty-four per cent of the men attend church regularly. On account of the difficulty of getting to church when the men do not consent to drive, the attendance of the women and men is pretty much the same, only thirty-six per cent of the women attending regularly. The same cause keeps down membership in Ladies' Aid Societies among country women. Only twenty-three per cent of the women have membership in this class of societies.



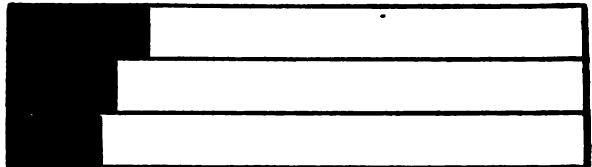
The percentage of families that attend services regularly varies with the nationalities. Only thirteen per cent of the American families attended church regularly. The mixed nationality families were the next lowest with an average of seventeen per cent. The averages of the other families were as follows: English, twenty-five per cent; Germans, forty-eight per cent; Scandinavians, fifty per cent, and Irish, sixty per cent. That does not mean, however, that all of these families attended church every Sunday. It merely indicates the percentage of families who make a practice of being represented at church every time there are services. A German and a

Family membership in

Ladies' Aid Society 24%.

Sunday School 15%

Young People's Society  
13%



Norwegian church in the country held services only every alternate Sunday. The following figures indicate the average number of times that all churchgoers in this township attended services during the year. The total average for men and women was but twelve, while in the homes with children and with church membership the average number of services attended was fourteen.

That there is a decrease of membership in progress in the country is also evidenced by the fact that, of the families married within the last ten years, only fifty-two per cent have membership in churches, and twenty-five per cent of these are irregular attendants at church services. Whether it be due to the fact that they do not all consider themselves permanent members of the community in which they live, or whether it is merely because they represent a younger generation, the average for renters is lower than the average for the whole. The following table compares the support of religious organizations from owners and tenants:

	Tenants per cent	Owners per cent
Church Membership: Husband .....	50	74
Church Membership: Wife .....	61	83
Ladies' Aid Society Membership .....	16	27
Young Peoples' Society Membership .....	5	17
Sunday School Membership .....	14	16
Regular Church Attendance: Men .....	27	37
Regular Church Attendance: Women .....	27	40
Devoted Church Workers .....	11	21

The reasons given by those whose attendance is irregular are various: "With all the cattle we now have, which keeps us busy the week around, with milk to get away to the station, Sundays as well as other days, it is



A Live Church in the Country.

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pretty hard for a farmer to get around in time for church." "Roads may be muddy, or it may be stormy weather at other times." "In winter it is so cold that it is hard to take the little children anywhere, and you can't leave them at home with no one to care for them." "Hired girls aren't to be had as they used to be." One woman stated that "it used to be all right for a mother to come into the church with a bunch of squalling young ones around her, but not many women have the nerve to do it now. What else can such a person do but stay home until her little ones grow up." Indeed, it appears to be true that as the children grow up parents begin to busy themselves to get them in touch with religious influences, and that accounts in a measure for the slight increase in average attendance noted in the families with grown-up children.

The membership in churches in this township is divided among eleven different churches. The Norwegian membership is divided between two distinct Lutheran Synods; so also the Swedish and the Danish. Thus it is that there are two Norwegian congregations in the city of N. The greater number of Norwegians are found in the southern part of the township, however, and they belong to a church in the adjoining township on the south. Another church attended by people from this township is the Norwegian church off the southeastern part of the township. The Danes have a church in N. Only one mixed Scandinavian family from this township attends this church. Although the Swedes have membership in "their own Lutheran churches," none of these churches are near enough and so these people attend other churches. One Swedish family had membership in an English Congregational church, the other attended either English Methodist or Norwegian Lutheran services. The Germans belonged either to the German Methodist church "in the heart of the German settlement," or they were members of the Moravian church in N. Many of the younger generation who speak English in preference to the German have joined the English Methodist church in N. All of the English, the Americans, and the Mixed Nationalities who are Methodists attend either the church in N. or the one at D. The Congregationalists in this township all belong to the N. church. There are but two families in this township with membership in the Episcopal church. The German Catholics attend the same church with the Irish in N.

It thus appears that the religious activity of this township is scattered widely between different churches and denominations. A great contrast is to be noted in the support given these various churches. Membership ranges from twenty-one families to two hundred and ten; the number of communicants, from ninety-one to six hundred and forty-three. The average number of people present at services varies from forty-five in a church with bi-weekly services, to three hundred and twenty-five in a church with

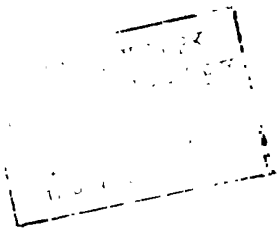
two services each Sunday. Some congregations are making "satisfactory growth," others are merely "holding their own," while still others have had a decrease of membership. Besides a pastor, some support an assistant, a special missionary, a good salaried organist, and sexton; have two services each Sunday; conduct Sunday-School work in outlying districts, and contribute substantial financial support to denominational colleges or seminaries; others are "nobly struggling along as best they can," receiving outside support from their synod, and having services but once every three weeks. Whereas the membership of one congregation "paid its pastor one thousand dollars, and an assistant seven hundred dollars and paid in a total of three thousand, two hundred and eighteen dollars in a year, and in addition to this subscribed for special contributions amounting to twenty-four thousand dollars," all that another congregation could do was to raise "a paltry four hundred and fifty dollars." The salaries of pastors vary from two thousand to six hundred dollars. In the latter case this sum was made up between three distinct congregations which the pastor served. However, in addition to his regular salary the minister had a free parsonage, and received fees for performing baptisms and marriages. Country people often give their pastor feed for his horses, and other gifts from the family orchard or garden.

In this township the two German churches seemed to have "the most up-hill fight to make." As already mentioned, their membership has been greatly diminished by those who have joined the English church at N., and another one had been losing membership due to "people moving elsewhere in the country, and a large number of young people leaving for the cities." Another loss of membership for the German churches is caused by the large percentage of young people who have married someone of a different nationality and, in many cases, of a different religious denomination. These mixed families, as we have seen, are poor in church attendance. There are besides these churches, some in the city of N., whose progress has been what their pastors prayed it might have been. In view of the fact that the Sunday evening services were not attended as well as the morning services, and with a desire to coöperate in a common purpose, four of the Protestant churches in N., including the German church, held union services each Sunday evening. The various pastors took turns at preaching the evening sermons. The services were held in rotation, first in one church and then in another. The union of these churches seemed to be working satisfactorily for all concerned.

It should not be inferred that all the country churches are dwindling. Some of the very best church support and religious spirit are found among the country congregations. Representatives of two denominations state that "the backbone of our support is the country congregations." Besides the Catholics whose support "left nothing to be wished for," the Scandi-



A Thriving Church in the City.



navian Lutherans in the southern part of this township gave special evidence of being good church-supporting people. The pastors of their churches were optimistic as to the situation. By keeping up a vigorous support of a good parochial school, the latter have succeeded in "keeping up the Norwegian language and traditions," and thus are "avoiding the breaking up of church connections that has been going on among the German communities where language and customs were not conserved."

It is a noteworthy fact that ninety-three per cent of the Scandinavian families were church members, whereas the average for all nationalities as will be remembered was but seventy per cent. So also in connection with the above, it is noteworthy that the younger generation of Norwegians

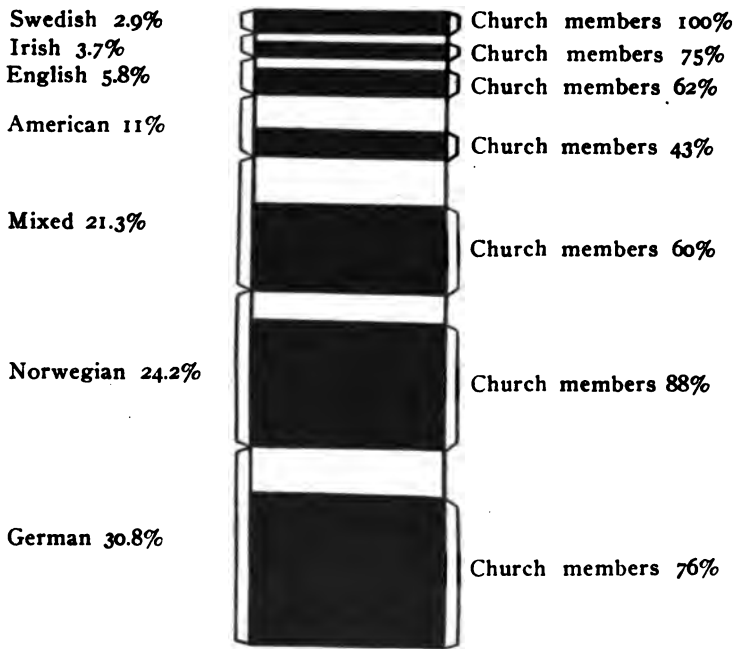


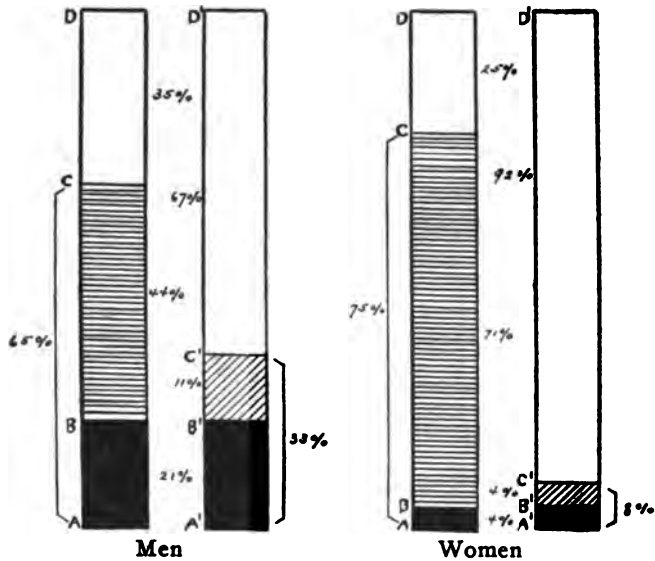
Diagram showing church membership by nationalities.

in the country appear to be "as good church people as the older ones." In addition to parochial schooling that all the children must attend until they are "confirmed communicant members of the church," the young people are further "kept close to the church by 'Young People's Society' organizations." Of the total family membership in these auxiliary organizations of the church, which is but thirteen per cent for this township, seventy per cent were Norwegians. The Organization Map shows the distribution of this membership according to homes.

Although fifty-nine per cent of the homes in the township had children



of Sunday-School age, there were only fifteen per cent of the homes from which anybody attended Sunday School. The low percentage is largely due to the fact that the Norwegian Lutherans as well as the Irish and German Catholics, who number thirty-two per cent of the total number of families in this township, as already mentioned, send their children to parochial schools where they receive their religious instruction on week days. This leaves only twelve per cent of the homes who have children of Sunday-School age, where there is no Sunday-School attendance. In practically all of these cases the parents seemed anxious to have their children attend Sunday School somewhere. The distance was, however, too great for most of them.



- A B Members of both churches and lodges.
- B C Church members only.
- A C Church membership.
- C D Not church members.
- A' B' Members of both churches and lodges.
- B' C' Lodge members only.
- A' C' Lodge membership.
- C' D' Not lodge members.

Diagram showing comparative membership of men and women in churches and lodges.

One of the big churches in N. has been trying to relieve this Sunday-School situation, in conjunction with a local college Y. M. C. A. Several Sunday Schools have been organized in outlying school districts. The meetings of these country Sunday Schools are aided every Sunday by religious workers of the Young Men's Christian Association. Some of the larger organizations have services for adults as well as for young people.

every two Sundays, by getting some one from the two colleges at N. to address them. Some of the local city pastors also preach to these gatherings occasionally. One of the larger of these Sunday-School organizations is found in this township. It had a membership of something over sixty and the leaders of it seemed well pleased with the support that these meetings were receiving from the farmers. Sunday meetings are held in the afternoon and it is said that this enables farmers to attend to their chores, get their milk off to the station, and yet get to religious services, without neglecting the care of their stock. Occasional social gatherings are held at the homes of members. These are well attended and seem to be enjoyed by all. All denominations partake in these gatherings.

The attitude of the farmers towards churches and religion in general varies naturally, as we have seen, with nationality and religious denominations as well as with different individuals. Many of the older people, however, together with some of the pastors, view with alarm "the steady trend towards worldly affairs, the increased number of dances and card parties, and the steady decline of morality going on hand in hand with a decline of church attendance." The custom of "family grace at table is dying out." It was observed in only twenty-seven per cent of the homes and these were mostly Norwegians and Germans. Only sixteen per cent of the farmers could be classified as "devoted church workers." On the other hand only ten per cent gave evidence of "not caring whether church was kept or not." Sixty-seven per cent of them seemed to feel that "no doubt the church is a great institution for good. It has an important work to do, and it ought to be supported better than it is, but somehow or other it seems hard for farmers to get to church."

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

In the country recreational activities blend very closely with social activities. When boys meet in a neighbor's pasture on a Sunday for a game of baseball, that becomes for them quite as much a social event as was the dance given in the neighbor's barn the night before. The average farmer makes little distinction between shooting gophers on a Sunday afternoon, and "driving over to wife's folks for dinner once in a while." To him both events mean "something of a change from the ordinary," or "such things help to pass away the time."

The accompanying diagram represents graphically the popularity of various kinds of recreation, showing the percentage of families partaking of each. It does not, however, show the relative importance of these various activities. To illustrate: while sociables and picnics appear at the head of the list, reaching seventy per cent of the families as a favorite form of en-

tainment, the dances, while participated in by only sixty-two per cent of the families, occur much more frequently. The extent to which these various forms of pastime or entertainment are being enjoyed by the people is not indicated therefore in the diagram.

The sociables and picnics just referred to are mostly those given, once a year, by the teachers of the various schools of the country. The above percentages refer only to the number of homes from which the married people attended. "Practically all the young folks attend such doings. It is considered big sport by 'the young bloods' to bid the basket of some fellow's girl, away up." Especially is this the case if "some city fellow" who is "rushing the school ma'am," should be there to "back up his claim on the girl with his cash." Occasionally some "extra smooth gink" suc-

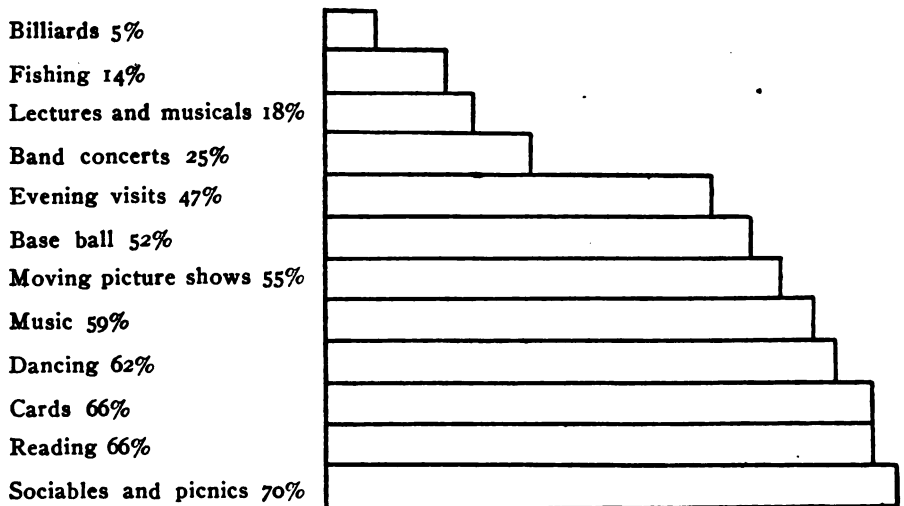


Diagram showing percentage of families partaking of the different forms of recreation.

ceeds in having "the gang run up somebody else's basket, or if he's got more good looks than money, he may have an understanding with his girl and thus, after having run a basket pretty high, let 'some poor boob' get stuck with it!" Although it may be a big ordeal for some bashful gallant, there have been some who "were equal to the occasion and now have a 'school ma'am' for a wife." In any event, "the thing appeals to the sporting blood," and basket sociables are "always well attended and many wish that there might be more of them."

There are in addition to the sociables some neighborhood picnics about once a year or so. These are usually held in May or June, "right after corn-planting time," and are often given by some school whose teacher is impressed with "the lack of those things among the country people." In



A Church in the Country—Bi-monthly Meetings.



A Union Sunday School Organization That is Getting the Farmers Out.



one case, a neighborhood takes an outing because they used to belong to a literary society, which held meetings during the winter months and then got together once a year for some trip to a near-by lake where "a general good time" was had. These people no longer meet at their literary programs in winter, but the annual outing of this community is nevertheless kept up, although "the attendance seems to be growing less each year." While some of the country children attend their Sunday-School picnics, the parents often "can not get away for these." On the Fourth of July some communities get together on some neighbor's shaded lawn and there the convivial hours of the day are spent, "at ease and in comfort until it is time to go home for chores." But few of the youth attend these. They "prefer to be at some city celebration, where they can take in a bowery dance in the evening."

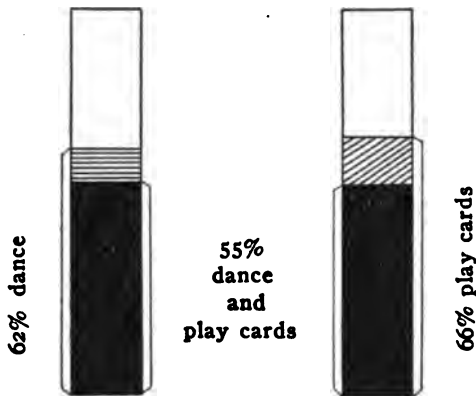


Diagram showing comparative attitude towards dancing and card playing.

Although reading is a form of recreation in sixty-six per cent of the homes, only forty-five per cent of the young people "do any reading worth mentioning." The boys who read generally interest themselves in farm papers, or some scientific article in a magazine. The girls "read little else than the current fiction and the fashion publications." In connection with the extent to which people read for recreation, it should be stated that this includes all the homes in which newspapers, farm journals, or other periodicals and books are read in the evening. In other words, it represents those homes in which there is some one who prefers to spend the winter evenings in reading rather than in playing cards or other forms of pastime.

The diagram shows that there is an equal number of homes in which people played cards. In only fourteen per cent of the places where men and boys played cards did they read magazines or farm papers. In many of these cases they have little card parties which are formed by neighbors who get together during the winter evenings, and sometimes play "well

into the wee hours of the morning." It is usually only the men and boys who play cards; the women usually "prefer to remain at home with the children," and read or "do fancy work." In only a few places do they have progressive card parties in which the ladies join the playing.

In twenty-seven per cent of the homes the married women still "crochet and do other fancy work for pastime." It should not be inferred from this that the young ladies in the country do no fancy work. There were but few homes with girls over sixteen where those girls had not done some fancy pattern needlework; the young people, however, do not generally do it as a part of their recreation. It is an avocation they delight to busy themselves with off and on during the day; but they do not, like many of the older women, "work hard all day and then take up some crocheting in the evening cheerfully humming a tune thereto until sleep overcomes them." Reading and music now form the chief home recreation of the younger generation of women.

Music was part of the recreation in sixty per cent of the homes. Twenty-two per cent of the homes in the township have pianos. In all but one of the homes where there were girls over sixteen years of age there was either a piano or an organ. In sixty-one per cent of these homes there was a piano. The kind of music that is most popular may be judged from the fact that in only twenty-three per cent of the homes with pianos was there anything besides rag-time music in sight. In some places having phonographs, the machines gave out "the very latest rags" until parents as well as children could sing or yodel it quite as musically as their "brass-lunged teacher, the talking machine." It should not be inferred, however, that the tastes of all run towards "that kind of stuff." In many homes they "keep such music on the pianos only because it's done by the jolly set in cities as well as in the country." They have the better kind of music as well as the popular kind, in most of these homes. Music of any kind is generally much enjoyed by all and in many country homes the long winter evenings are made brighter for the family gathered around the sitting-room heater, enjoying old-time melodies played on the piano or the violin.

That most evenings are spent at home is indicated by the popularity of reading and music as recreation during the winter months. Our diagram shows that only forty-seven per cent of the families in this township exchange evening visits, "which used to be so popular in the early days." Most of the families who still make those evening visits are "those with whom card playing is the chief social pastime." It is true that every farmer does some visiting during the year. However, most of them usually do it on Sundays. Among fifty-three per cent of the families, Sunday visits were the only ones made. These visits were usually exchanged between two or three neighbors, or relatives living near by, and once or twice a month was considered a fair average of the visits thus made.

As we have seen in our consideration of the routine of work of the present-day progressive farmer, he is forced to keep regular hours the year around on account of the importance of giving the right kind of care to his high-grade live stock. Hence, when chores are done in the evening, he takes up a farm journal or magazine and spends the evening reading, not because he is by nature anti-social and does not care to mingle in company with his neighbors, but he feels that "you can't afford to go away and tear around all night when you've got to get up at the usual time the next morning and keep on the go all day, just as if you had gotten your regular amount of sleep."

Another thing conducive to the decrease of social gatherings in the evenings is that "there has grown up a difference among country people." One old settler stated that "in the early days people were more social, because they were more alike." He explained that "nowadays, even if people do speak the same language, they don't associate with each other, except in a business way, unless they belong to the same church, have had the same education, and are about equally rich. There were no rich and poor people in the country then. All those of the same nationality, at least, had the same education, and the same social standards and tastes. There were no social classes in the country, as now; and that is why people got together more."

That these differences between the various families in a community do make for more or less of a social cleavage, is evident from the fact that the social standards of formal etiquette, as well as questions of moral propriety, differ, not only with nationality and church affiliations, but also with wealth and education. To illustrate, while some families consider it "not in accordance with the spirit of the Sabbath to allow boys to play baseball or even to go visiting on Sundays," many of their neighbors "see no harm in that kind of play," and "find no time to visit any other time than Sundays." So also some families "will not associate with a class of people who drink beer at their parties, and whose pleasure consists in listening to Uncle Josh's funny sayings run off on a phonograph, alternated with ghastly narrations of somebody's sickness or death." The latter individuals in turn may not think it "proper for Christian people to let their daughters have anything to do with families where they think more of lodges, and 'whist parties, with wine to end up on,' than they do of church." The tendency seems to be towards more and more exclusiveness. In some places these differences have developed a sort of a clan spirit. The extent of this is indicated somewhat by the fact that twenty-six per cent of the families visited "only with relatives." In some cases this clanishness had gone so far that children ten years of age did not know "the given names" of their nearest neighbors, although they had "been born and brought up" on adjoining farms. "While the members of these clans



are very sociable among themselves, an outsider has no show of getting in with them except on business." One instance may be cited, in which a new family had come into one of these neighborhoods, and they "lived there three years and not a single neighbor woman had called on the new-comer."

That this is a different spirit from that which prevailed "in the early days" is shown by the testimony of another old settler: "People used to get together much more than now; in those days they didn't wait to be invited, they just went and got acquainted. If help was needed or anybody was sick in the neighborhood, everybody was sure to be there and help in any way they could. Nowadays nobody gets a chance to help out a neighbor any more. Even though everybody has the telephone, there may be someone taken sick at the neighbors, and instead of letting the women come and help them, they quietly hire doctors and nurses, and the first time that you hear of anybody having been sick, is after the person is dead and they are getting ready for the funeral."

The social intercourse between country people and the town families has already been alluded to in a previous chapter. It was noted that an estrangement is said to have taken place between the farmer's family and that of the merchant. The same differences that have been noted among the various farmers' ideals and standards, only in a more accentuated form, are at the bottom of this social division. It isn't that a city woman is intentionally "cold and distant" to her church sister from the country when they meet at their Ladies' Aid Society gatherings; it is more because the lady from the country "feels on the outside" on account of the difference in taste that has grown up between her and her city sister. Even though their school education may in some cases have been the same, their married lives have been taken up with entirely different activities and interests and it is often "hard to find topics of common interest." At times, also, the estrangement is caused simply by the changes of fortune, the city sister having found a home of affluence, whereas her country sister who may have "had sickness in the family" and thus "finds it impossible to attend town functions," because her "pride will not let herself be an object of pity, on account of out-of-date clothes that she would be forced to wear, if she were to go."

There was evidence of this gulf between country women and their rich town acquaintances in various homes; and it is a potent factor, not only in keeping some country people from attending the church functions in some of the more "citified churches," but also in keeping low the number of women who join lodges, or attend such meetings after they have joined. A diagram representing the church and lodge membership shows not only the percentage of men and women in churches and lodges, but it also brings out to what extent church and lodge membership are exclusive

of one another. It does not appear that lodge membership tends in any way to react unfavorably upon church membership, while church membership, no doubt, does prevent many people of certain denominations from joining lodges. From this comparative diagram we also get the information that however low lodge membership of men is, that of women is lower. These diagrams point out the limited amount of social intercourse there is between town and country people. The membership in churches and lodges are about the only connection between the town and country people. And the lodge meetings are attended even less regularly than are church services or the functions of auxiliary societies. That all these things tend toward "a widening gulf between town and country people" would seem inevitable.

Resuming consideration of the more particularly recreational activities, we find that only eighteen per cent of all the families in the township ever attended any dramatic productions, lectures, or musicals at the city of N. As already stated, there are two colleges located at N. and thus the farmers "within striking distance" of the city have a goodly number of opportunities to attend some of the musical treats or good Thespian productions offered at various times during the year. Only a few of the above-mentioned eighteen per cent find themselves able to attend more than one or two of those events during the year.

Band concerts are more popular mostly "because they were free," but also because people could "take them in without fixing up much." The reason that only twenty-five per cent of the families had attended these open-air concerts given "on the public square" or in the City Park was because "it is too far to drive, when the horses have been working hard all day." These concerts were not given, however, last summer because the City Council and Commercial Club failed to make any appropriation for them. The country people round about the city all "missed the concerts very much."

Moving picture shows are more popular than the musicals and high-class productions. Their popularity is limited, however, almost exclusively to the young folks and children. The young people patronize them in preference to the "high-class productions in the opera house," not only because "the movies" are cheaper, but because they feel more at home there. They may take their lady friends to these shows almost any night that they happen to be downtown together, and needn't trouble to get on nice clothes for the occasion. Still, in less than twelve per cent of the families in the township were there young men or girls who attended moving picture shows with any regularity. There was not much evidence of a moving picture mania. The percentage given on the diagram represents all those homes from which some one had ever attended a moving picture

or a medicine show performance. In most of the cases, the parents had taken their children in to see the pictures some Saturday afternoon or evening when they happened to be in town.

The number of men who played pool or billiards was very small indeed. In only five per cent of the homes had either the father or any of his sons learned to play pool. Very few country boys get any chance to learn pool, even if they should care to play. The pastime has always been associated with "drinking and gambling," and only a very few young men had "hard reputations along that line." Sentiment seemed to be hostile towards the use of alcoholic drinks in forty-two per cent of the homes.

In only fourteen per cent of the homes was any "time taken off" for fishing. People generally seemed interested in it as a sport, but "we have no time to get away for anything like that."

With the young men baseball was a rival in popularity with dancing. Although the diagram makes dancing appear the more popular form of recreation of the two, baseball is still the more popular among the young men. The average for dancing is obtained by counting all those who participate in dancing whether they be married people or boys or girls. In calculating the percentage for baseball the average is based on boys alone. Thus it is that the diagram does not express accurately the extent to which dancing is popular with the boys. Although baseball is still the most popular sport for the boys, the pastime seems to be losing ground in the country. This may be explained because "the girls seem to interest the boys more, nowadays, than does a good scrappy game of baseball." Such was the opinion of the captain of one of the country teams. He stated that it was easy to get a pasture in which to play, but "dances now come so often on Saturday nights, that it is hard to get any young fellows out the next afternoon for a baseball game." Parental objection no longer deters many young fellows from playing. Parents do not care especially although they always state that the boys play "in a neighbor's pasture," not their own. Girls attend these games very little. "They don't seem much interested" and so "it is pretty hard to get 'girl-crazy fellows' out to play a game."

Among the boys and girls taken as a whole, dancing is the most popular form of social intercourse. In sixty-nine per cent of the homes with boys and girls over sixteen years of age, there were some who indulged in dancing as part of their social recreation. These dances are sometimes little neighborhood affairs given in the homes of those who have a kitchen big enough for such a gathering and who may get together now and then for card parties or expressly for the purpose of playing games for a while and "winding the thing up with a dance." The diagram (page 61) shows to what extent the families who play cards also indulge in dancing. It is at these house parties and small dances that married people and parents

join with young folks to "pass the bigger part of the winter nights in whirling waltzes and lively two steps. Nobody cares for the square dances any more."

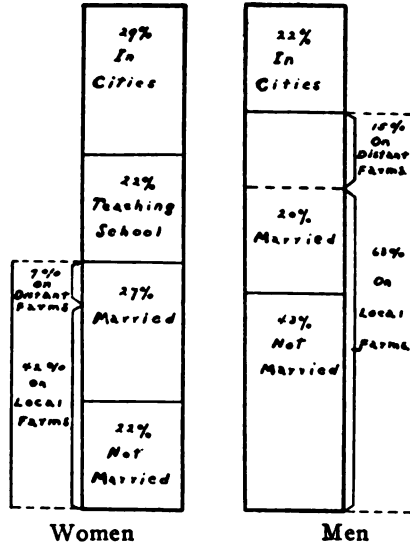


Diagram accounting for the sons and daughters over twenty-one years of age, of present heads of families.

The young people as a rule "don't care much for the little house-party dance affairs," compared with the dances at public halls in town. Various organizations give these public dances at various times during the year. Some of these are "invitation affairs," but "any girl who has a little style about her is sure to be asked to go." Attendance at these town affairs is regarded as evidence of considerable social distinction in certain circles, although these functions may be "engineered by a gang of rough necks and low brows." Nevertheless those who attend these town dances are regarded with more or less envy by the girls "whose fellows didn't get a bid." The next time they get a chance to "pick up on some of those swell new rag dances they're going to do it," and in that way "get in line for a bid to some of those town affairs where they have such nice floors and such dandy fellows." This is not meant to represent the majority of the country girls, but it is typical of a large number of the younger set, who "do not find it much fun to go to those family affairs with a bunch of poky young stiffs hanging around."

In certain localities this fondness for dancing assumes the proportions of "a veritable craze among the young people during the spring months." It is then that some farmer in the neighborhood has an empty barn in which he consents to "let the young fry go to it." The character of the

crowds that attend these barn dances "varies with the neighborhood in which they are held." In some places it was the testimony of both old and young that "everything goes off smoothly and everybody behaves himself; the days of drunken brawls at these affairs are a thing of the past." In other neighborhoods parents objected to having their daughters go to "those whiskey-scented affairs." "These dances are going to prove the ruination of the younger generation." "They are getting to be the devil's way of seducing our youth, but what can you do when your children are grown up and will dance in spite of your oft-repeated disapproval?"

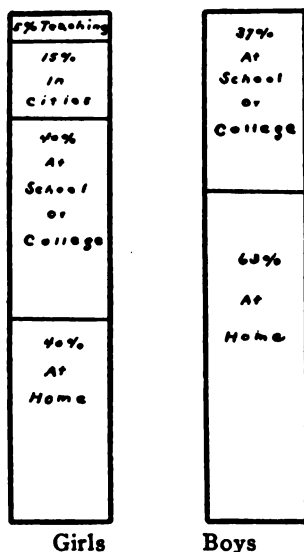


Diagram accounting for the sons and daughters between ages of sixteen and twenty-one of present heads of families.

We have noted how various activities fit in with the present business of farming, and the farmers' attitude and practice in regard to them. Let us now consider these things from the standpoint of the youth, and see, if possible, how they "take to conditions of country life." This is important because, upon the attitude of the young generation towards these conditions depends "the biggest problem of the farming communities."

We have seen what the farmer's work is, and attention has been called to the fact that for many farmers "it is the biggest problem to get satisfactory help." Women, too, complain that "you can no longer get a hired girl for love or for money." Why is this so? An annexed diagram shows what the daughters of this township have done in the way of expressing their attitude towards country life. The figures are based on all the daughters of the present heads of families in the township. Another diagram shows the extent to which boys have sought to get away from this kind of life.



**This Farmer, Though Retired, has Remained in the Country.**



**The City Attracts Young and Old.**

THE  
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ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATION

ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATION  
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From these figures it appears that the efflux of youth from the country was greater among the girls than among the boys, especially if we consider that those who have taken up teaching as a profession are thereby "expressing their intention not to stay on the farm if they can help it." The number of young men who have "left the country for something better" is large enough, however, to cause a lack of efficient farm labor in this township as well as in other sections of the country.

Most of the older people feel that "the country is all right if you aren't afraid to work; you at least get enough to eat." The growing generations, however, soon come to the conclusion that "the country means work and little else." Small wonder it is then that many boys try to see if they can't "get a little of real life." "Plenty to eat," doesn't satisfy them, if they have read of the life of the great "White Way," as it is pictured in magazine stories. They feel that "there is nothing in the country for a fellow to enjoy." "People say: 'Hard work is the key to success.' The farmer gets the hard work all right, but what is the farmer's success? To have plenty to eat! To lay by a little money so that he may start out his boy in the same kind of a life that he has lived! And then to retire to town to die! That's a successful farmer's life! But is that really life?" Many farmers' boys who have read and "seen something of a different kind of existence" do not feel that they "care to repeat the old man's experiences." "Oh yes," say some, "you may tell us that we ought to be glad to hear the birds singing in the tree tops; see the beautiful spring-time blossoms and enjoy the fragrance of blooming orchards and budding roses! But you just put one of those poet fellows to work on a farm. Let him buckle in and get down to work, shocking barley for a while, and see what he feels most, the prickling itch or the beauties of a July sunset; and just notice how many birds he hears singing as he gets up at four-thirty or five o'clock the next morning. See how your budding poet enjoys the fragrance of spring-time blossoms while he is swilling the hogs in the morning dew! Oh yes, we've got the fellows in the country who say that they can see all those beauties there, but it's funny that they never stay in the country to make their living."

The modern country girl of "high-school breeding" is even more sophisticated than her brother. When "in the rush of the season's work it happens that hired help can not be gotten" such a girl may be kind-hearted enough to take turns with her mother in raking and piling up the hay. She does it with the consciousness, however, that the physique and graces of the peasant type of womanhood may be charming enough to a literary connoisseur when reading the pleasing couplets that relate the romance of a rustic Maud Muller, but that "the pitchfork is not the instrument nowadays for developing the style which attracts men in real life." So also the modern milkmaid is fully aware that the girl who has to sweat



at the side of eight or ten cows each evening during the rush season, and pulls her fingers stiff and out of shape, is thereby "forced out of the running by the miss with the long slender hand and the lily fingers which can coax thrilling rhapsodies from the piano."

That is the attitude which has been developed among those "who have gone to school and become smart." But even girls with only a little schooling feel "that the country is so dead, there is nothing doing." Accordingly we have only ten per cent of the girls in this township who were willing to work out in the country. Over twenty-five per cent of the girls over eighteen had gone to work in the cities, "because there even a working girl can get five and six dollars a week while the farmers pay but three and four dollars, and in the cities you don't have to work half so hard, and can have some fun all the time." Other young women who "would not marry a farmer for love or for money," stated it as their opinion that "even a janitor, or a drayman in a city, can offer his wife more conveniences and social life than can the best of our farmers." A study of the foregoing diagrams will bring out graphically to what extent this attitude has developed among country girls.

These considerations bring us to the hired-help problem. The same things that make farm life a wearisome drudgery for the native son also tend to make farm life disagreeable to the hired man, even "doubly more so." Not only does the hired man get the same hard toilsome routine of work, but his recreation and social life is even more limited than that of the native son. There are still vestigial evidences of the old practice of wily farmers "using the charms of their daughters to keep the hired man steady and devoted to his job," but "what chance has such a man of marrying a well-to-do farmer's daughter, when she sneezes at the attentions of even the wealthiest young farmers in the neighborhood?" One prosperous young farmer said, "It's pretty hard for just an ordinary good farmer lad to get a nice cultured girl; and you can't blame the girls either, after having read some of the novels and stuff they all are so taken in with nowadays."

It is not that laborers won't go to farms for steady work the year around because the girls in the country are "not nice to them," or because they aren't received into the country activities freely. Laborers are made to feel at home, but the same conditions that are responsible for the country youth leaving the farm for the city, are also responsible for "the hired-help problem." Indeed, there would be no hired-help problem for the farmer of to-day, and not much of a tenancy problem, if the youth of the country were to stay on the farm. The fact is that city life appeals more to the younger generation than does country life. And it is this that makes young men express themselves as follows: "I would just as soon commit

myself within the walls of the penitentiary as I would voluntarily tie myself down to work on a farm the year around!"

"What is the farmer to do when his sons leave him, and hired help can not be gotten to take their place?" Many say, "If this keeps on the only thing to do will be to cut down the size of farms so that the farmers can do the work themselves by coöperating during the haying and harvest seasons." But very few farmers are willing to do that. "You can't make the money on a small forty- or eighty-acre farm that you can on a hundred and sixty- or three hundred and twenty-acre farm." "No doubt, smart agricultural professors would tell us to farm less land and produce more per acre; that may feed more bankers and college men, but where is the farmer's profit going to come in, on such a scheme?" In the meantime those farmers for whom "the help problem becomes too hard" have rented out their farms, settled down in some country, city, or village, to "take whatever can be gotten in that way." Some farmers "see danger in the growth of tenancy. It means run-down farms, quack grass and Canada thistles, and no interest in what is for the best of the community as a whole." The map given in the introductory chapter shows how tenancy has spread, and various comparative diagrams in other chapters, as well as the subjoined comparative table, point out to what extent these misgivings on the part of some are well founded.

That these labor conditions are not merely local is attested by all farmers. They also say that they are "paying all that conditions will justify; anyway it isn't a matter of pay with most young men you want to hire." "Laborers admit that they can make more money on the farm than by working elsewhere, but in spite of that they won't work with a farmer steady." This points unmistakably to the conclusion that the reason farmers find the hired help problem "the big problem" is because of social conditions. "Young Americans have had it bred into them that life should offer something more than a mere bread-and-butter existence and it is the desire to get away and see something of the world, to enjoy life while you are yet young, that is causing our youth to flock to cities, drifting from one place to another, until finally when they have seen all they care for, they are no longer able or willing to settle down to the dull monotonous work that is necessary to keep business a-going." That was the way one farmer had analyzed the causes of "the social unrest and general discontent" which he held responsible for the labor problem, as it presents itself in the country.

### SUMMARY OF COMPARATIVE DATA FOR OWNERS AND TENANTS

A series of tables summarizing data as applied to owners and tenants is appended herewith and illustrates some of the many lines on which information has been gathered and tabulated, on the basis of which conclusions have been drawn in this study.

	Tenants per cent	Owners per cent
Men's Recreation		
Reading .....	66	65
Women's Recreation		
Reading .....	55	72
Music .....	11	21
Children's Recreation		
Reading .....	27	59
Habitually Attend Sociables and Picnics .....	64	73
Attend Moving Picture Shows Regularly .....	18	10
Attend Band Concerts .....	20	27
Attend Lectures and Musicals .....	5	25
Permit Card Playing .....	59	70
Hired Men		
By day only .....	36	33
By month less than 4 months .....	11	7
By month less than 1 year and more than 4 months .....	9	9
By year .....	14	16
No hired help .....	23	23
Hired Girl .....	..	15
Hostile toward Scientific Methods .....	7	14
Advocate of Scientific Methods .....	45	42
Hostile toward Liquor .....	39	43
Woman's Work		
In Field .....	20	14
Do Milking .....	48	24
In Garden .....	75	68
Wife or children haul milk .....	40	34
Soft Water in House .....	59	64
Drinking Water in House .....	9	12
Lawn-mower .....	27	33
Orchard .....	29	35
Hammock .....	29	32
Flowers .....	48	43
Good Garden .....	68	84
Furnace .....	16	16
Oil-Stove .....	45	62
Part Tailored Clothing .....	39	36
Food Purchased		
Fresh Meat .....	59	59
Fruit in Season .....	48	58

	Tenants per cent	Owners per cent
<b>Food from Farm</b>		
Berries .....	32	55
Apples .....	34	62
White Table-cloth .....	27	23
Ladies' Home Journal .....	7	9
Woman's World .....	14	23
Youth's Companion .....	5	4
Popular Magazines .....	20	30
Cheap Literature .....	11	10
Daily Papers .....	45	65
Piano .....	14	26
Other Musical Instruments .....	48	39
Chromos .....	39	51
<b>Lodge Membership</b>		
Husband .....	20	39
Wife .....	9	8
<b>Visiting</b>		
Only Relatives .....	29	24
Near Neighbors .....	40	38
Sundays Only .....	61	50
Afternoon Visits .....	45	33
Evening Visits .....	39	51
Want Consolidation of Schools .....	18	26

### BRIEF COMMENTS

1. Machinery has decreased the amount of labor required by farmers, but a changed type of farming has made for additional work which can not be reduced to machine process.

2. A "painstaking dependable class of labor" is required to carry on successful farming as advocated by agricultural experts.

3. "The right kind of farm labor is getting scarce and increasingly difficult to get."

4. The cause of this scarcity is that foreign labor is no longer coming in to replace the native sons who "get some schooling and then try their luck in the city or go where land is cheaper."

5. The "floating hobo labor" will not tie themselves up for steady farm work the year around. Hence the "hired-help problem is the big farm problem."

6. Less than fifty per cent of the farmers read their farm papers; but there is a growth of opinion that "it is well to keep up with the times, in farming as well as other things."

7. Many farmers regard it unfair where they are charged prices high enough to maintain a city delivery service from which they derive no benefit.

8. Some farmers would like to be shown that the country merchants can furnish an economic service equivalent to what they get from catalogue houses.

9. A large number of farmers say they are especially interested in the daily papers because of what they learn from the marketing page.

10. Many influential farmers feel that they are helpless in matters of marketing unless the advantages of organization are extended beyond the local units.

11. Occasional failures or mistakes among farmers have tended to create a feeling of distrust regarding the efficacy of cooperation. This diffidence has not been sufficient, however, to prevent a steady growth in farmers' organizations.

12. Politically, farmers are less active than they were a generation ago. Generally they feel that politics are outside of their domain and that it is futile for farmers to concern themselves about affairs of state.

13. Farmers generally read their local papers but believe an important service would be added if more attention were given to issues vital to themselves.

14. Each year the farmers of the township could construct one mile of permanent road-bed, well-drained and gravelled, for the amount of money they now distribute over the township, if taxes were used according to plans of the State Highway Engineer.

15. Those farmers who oppose centralized control of road improvement fear that outlying roads will be neglected for the benefit of a few main roads of a special interest to automobilists.

16. The farmers do not feel satisfied with what the country schools have accomplished.

17. The church membership of the township is thirty per cent higher than that of the State, but the younger generations are breaking church connections. Farmers maintain that "present-day conditions on the farm make it too hard to get to church or anywhere else."

18. The increase of live stock has tended to decrease social activities in the country.

19. Different standards of living among the farmers have divided neighborhoods, and tended to decrease sociability.

20. There are six homes in the township with complete modern heating and plumbing equipment.

21. The farmers' wives are not as anxious to leave the farm as their husbands. Twenty-nine per cent of the men want to go to town to live as soon as they can afford to do so; only thirteen per cent of the wives had the same desire.

22. With the youth it is different; the girls leave the farm more than the boys. Seventy-eight per cent of the sons over twenty-one years of

age of present heads of families are now farming, while only forty-seven per cent of the daughters are living on a farm.

23. The causes for the outflow of youth are the same as the causes for the "hired-help problem," and "the tenancy problem." They are social causes.

24. Farmers say that "the only way to improve country life is to make it return bigger profits—big money returns are needed, not only big crops."

